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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: Review of mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system

Mid-term review of the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report summarizes information provided by entities in the United Nations system on their efforts in 1996 and 1997 to implement the activities in the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001. It also highlights obstacles encountered, and makes a number of recommendations for action in light of experience gained to date.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 1996/34, the Economic and Social Council endorsed the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001, and called for a mid-term review, which is to be undertaken by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-second session, in 1998. The Secretary-General was requested to submit a progress report on the implementation of the plan for purposes of the mid-term review.

2. The plan was formulated at the end of 1995 pursuant to a decision of the Commission on the Status of Women. It was structured around the 12 critical areas of concern contained in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women) in 1995. It was also formulated to reflect relevant mandates from other recent United Nations conferences and summits. Activities were clustered under each critical area according to a typology of action, i.e., information collection and database development; research and analysis; operational activities, including advisory services, technical assistance and training; and public outreach and information dissemination. The plan largely addressed activities targeted to women but also included gender-responsive activities that were planned as part of mainstream programmes and projects.

3. In order to prepare the present report, the Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat sought information on implementation from all entities of the United Nations system, including on issues raised by the Commission and the Committee on Programme Coordination when they reviewed the draft of the plan in 1996. As of 5 December 1997, the following 33 entities had responded:

Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat

Division for the Advancement of Women

Population Division

Former Department for Development Support and Management Services

Statistics Division

Department of Public Information

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)

International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/WTO)

Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)

United Nations Interregional Crime Research Institute (UNICRI)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

United Nations University (UNU)

United Nations Volunteers (UNV)

World Bank

World Food Programme (WFP)

World Health Organization (WHO)

4. Since the plan was formulated at the end of 1995 and approved in mid-1996, the actual period of implementation has been about 18 months. Some respondents noted, therefore, that most of their activities are still in the implementation stage.

5. Despite considerable overall progress in implementing the wide array of activities envisaged under the plan and a policy commitment to the proposals spelled out at the Fourth World Conference on Women, a number of obstacles have been encountered, including lack of data and of methodologies and indicators for monitoring progress; lack of tools for tracking expenditures for cross-sectoral activities, at both headquarters and field levels; inadequate human and financial resources; low levels of commitment, both politically in some countries and at the level of management in some agencies of the United Nations system; cultural and other constraints, and delays in delivery of technical assistance. Those obstacles are discussed in more detail in section III below.

II. Brief overview of progress in implementation in the 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action

6. A brief overview of progress in the implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action by the United Nations system at mid-term is set out below. The overview is linked to the strategic orientation/focus under each critical area of concern, as spelled out in the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001.

7. In the strategic orientation/focus of United Nations system action in the critical area of concern "Women and poverty", the importance of women's empowerment to raise their standard of living and reduce their poverty has been emphasized in keeping with the Platform for Action. Implementation during the period under review has therefore included support for women entrepreneurs, particularly in rural areas, including home-based workers; integrated rural development; studies of female migration; credit access for women, and strengthening of the informal sector. Integrated approaches to rural development identified rural women and girls as key agents, a gender-sensitive approach which led to increased assistance to rural women producers.[1]

8. In the critical area "Education and training of women", the strategic orientation/focus of United Nations system activities indicated in the plan has been based on a rights principle. United Nations entities have developed and supported the use of appropriate training tools to strengthen women's skills and those of teachers in areas ranging from literacy and basic education to science and technology. Advocacy for girls' education has been undertaken, and there has been wider acceptance of the empirical evidence that educating girls and women raises productivity and reduces fertility rates.

9. In addressing the critical area "Women and health", the strategic focus has been concentrated on human immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency disease (AIDS), reproductive health, and the reduction of maternal and child mortality and morbidity. Environmental health, gender and drug abuse, the impact of tropical diseases on women and the health effects of female genital mutilation also received increased attention. A joint World Health Organization (WHO)/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) statement has been issued on female genital mutilation, and UNFPA appointed a special ambassador on the issue. Implementation under this critical area also addressed objectives in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994.

10. Prevention and the root causes of violence against women have been the focus of activities in the critical area "Violence against women". Research on violence against women has continued, as have advocacy and support for policy measures on violence against women and new forms of protection for the victims of abuse, as well as increased collection and dissemination of data. The Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women has reported on the situation in various countries, and her mandate has been renewed by the Commission on Human Rights. The first grants have been made under the Trust Fund on Violence against Women set up under the Untied Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

11. In response to the Platform for Action, the plan also focuses on the critical area "Women and armed conflict", with particular attention to the specific gender impact of armed conflict, including rape and its short- and long-term effects on women and girls. Efforts have been made to promote a gender-sensitive approach to conflict resolution and the management of conflict through capacity-building and training. Discussions on establishing an international criminal court, with specific attention to war crimes that affect women and girls, particularly rape, have moved forward.

12. In the critical area "Women and the economy", the strategic orientation/focus of the plan is on the promotion of a comprehensive strategy for equal opportunities for women in employment and for the development of women entrepreneurs by enhancing women's access to productive resources. United Nations system activities have therefore included increasing women's access to credit and to opportunities for entrepreneurship, and raising awareness of the importance of the economic empowerment of women and the impact of economic policies on women, including trade policies. Research has been intensified on the participation of women in manufacturing, and on the patterns, determinants and future trends for women's employment. Particular attention has been given to rural women's enterprises and employment opportunities.

13. The Platform for Action and in turn the plan both place new importance on the critical area "Women in power and decision-making". In this critical area, the United Nations system has focused on the importance of increasing the number of women in decision-making positions at all levels and in various sectors, strengthening the role of women parliamentarians, leadership and management training, and researching issues of women's empowerment and honouring significant women role models. Support has been given to women's organizations to empower women, particularly at the community level.

14. The Platform for Action calls for strengthening the capacity and catalytic role of national machineries for the advancement of women. It also calls for the overall collection and development of gender-disaggregated statistics and indicators. Activities carried out during the period under review in line with the plan have also focused on the development of gender-sensitive performance indicators, increased visibility and inclusion of gender issues in policies and programmes, and gender-sensitive development planning.

15. The strategic orientation /focus of the United Nations system in the critical area "Human rights of women" is to emphasize women's full and equal enjoyment of their rights. Activities have focused on educating women and adolescents about their rights; improving servicing and visibility for the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), including seminars for parliamentarians and policy makers on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and mainstreaming gender in the international treaty regime.

16. With respect to the critical area "Women and the media", the strategy of the United Nations system has focused on advocacy and training for gender-sensitive media coverage and access by women to new communication technologies to raise awareness, advocate for greater attention by the media to women's issues, and promote a positive, well-balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media. Women and the new electronic media garnered attention, but resources were still primarily directed at the traditional media.

17. The strategic orientation/focus of United Nations system action in the critical area "Women and the environment" emphasizes the importance of ensuring that women's contribution to environmental protection is recognized and assisted, and that gender concerns are reflected in policy-making and environmental decision-making. Activities ranged from the development of guidelines incorporating gender concerns and research on the impact of environmental degradation on women's livelihood to the development of training packages on women and environmental management.

18. Under the critical area "The girl child", the United Nations system emphasized efforts to eliminate gender-based disparities among girls. During the period under review, activities included development of databases on child mortality by sex, support for programmes addressing illiteracy among girls and advocacy for the rights of the girl child, including girls in rural areas, education for girls both formal and non-formal, girls in the workplace, and the elimination of harmful practices that inhibit girls' full development.

III. Institutional and financial arrangements and obstacles encountered in implementation

19. Respondents noted many advances in the areas of institutional development and finance along the lines indicated in the Beijing Platform for Action and the system-wide action plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001, but at the same time noted that many of the obstacles encountered in implementing the Platform and the activities indicated in the plan are associated with institutional and financial issues. Those obstacles, as well as positive developments and developments with respect to such cross-cutting issues as gender equality mainstreaming, are reported below.

A. Gender equality mainstreaming

20. A number of entities noted that mandates for mainstreaming gender, following the Fourth World Conference on Women and other recent United Nations global conferences, have been designed and endorsed by various intergovernmental bodies, such as the Commission on Population and Development, the Commission on Social Development and various governing bodies of specialized agencies, funds and programmes, and that that has been newly reflected in certain programme budgets. In July 1997, agreed conclusions 1997/2 on gender mainstreaming, which addressed the entire United Nations system, were adopted by the Economic and Social Council, and the Secretary-General's reform proposals submitted to the General Assembly in 1997 call for gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes.

21. Several entities have issued directives to staff to step up their efforts to use gender analysis in designing and assessing plans and projects. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator's Direct Line 11 on Gender Equality and the Advancement of Women, addressed to all resident representatives, lays out the commitment of UNDP to supporting gender equality and the advancement of women. A UNDP guidance note on gender mainstreaming, which has been sent to all country offices, spells out the commitment, competencies and accountability measures needed to make gender mainstreaming a reality. The World Bank has reviewed projects designed/developed using gender analysis to identify the best ways to ensure women's participation and women's access to project resources and services, and to improve women's educational attainment, health status and/or income levels, and is using that review as a baseline for further project development. The World Bank has also prepared six regional gender action plans. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has published a comprehensive policy paper and action plan for putting a gender perspective into all of its policies, programmes and projects, entitled "Gendered Habitat".

22. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) instituted a consultative process to develop and finalize gender programmes of action for 1996-2000 in 24 divisions. The regular programmes and projects of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) are being revised to introduce gender analysis. The World Food Programme (WFP) has launched a set of commitments to women to be met by the year 2001, which have been translated by all its country offices and several headquarters units into specific action plans. UNAIDS has identified gender as one of its cross-cutting themes to be mainstreamed.

23. In revising guidelines for country programmes, UNICEF emphasizes gender as a cross-cutting theme, using a rights approach, with a view to influencing the situation analysis of children and women in country programme preparation and promoting the use of gender-sensitive indicators in setting goals and monitoring progress. UNICEF country programmes increasingly give attention to gender issues, as demonstrated in new country programmes submitted to its Executive Board. Out of 40 such programmes, 17 had a high gender profile and 13 fell into the medium category. At the organizational level, UNICEF has mainstreamed the gender perspective in programme guidelines of sectoral programmes, starting with water and environmental sanitation. A separate module for integrating gender concerns is being prepared and is to be ready by end-1997 to provide guidance and hands-on application in that sector.

24. UNFPA has been making special efforts to ensure that gender issues are mainstreamed into all of its programmes. Those efforts include the revision of all policy guidelines to include the gender perspective; formulation of a draft conceptual framework and indicators to monitor the extent to which gender considerations have been effectively integrated into all aspects of its country programmes; and an assessment of gender mainstreaming in 13 country programmes.

25. Some agencies that have reported on progress in efforts to mainstream gender note that although policies have been put in place on women and gender, policy implementation does not always receive consistent attention by senior management, and systems for monitoring the implementation of gender activities as part of larger programmes and projects are largely absent. In some cases, the guidelines developed to integrate gender into programmes and projects are not being fully applied at the operational level. UNDP notes that in a sample of 417 of its recent projects, gender is superficially added but rarely integrated into operating assumptions.

26. It has been reported by some entities that a perception that gender issues are synonymous with women's issues has resulted in a poor understanding of gender mainstreaming and its implications for programming. Lack of awareness and understanding of the role of women in various sectors also continues to be an obstacle. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) reports that traditional approaches creating separate women's activities and organizations have caused problems and conflicts in certain

areas. To address that problem, UNEP has adjusted its policies to ensure that a gender perspective is reflected in all policy design, and has developed gender-sensitivity criteria for inclusion in its design, approval and evaluation manual. At ECLAC, efforts are being made to identify gender variables that will benefit growth and efficiency as well as allow the analysis of differential impact of public policies on men and women.

27. Work under way by the United Nations Development Group to define a United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) offers opportunities to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment goals are integrated into the United Nations country team framework for development cooperation at the country level. Further efforts are clearly needed in that regard, however, particularly in the application of the framework at the country level to ensure that gender issues figure prominently.

28. With respect to methodologies for gender analysis, a fundamental obstacle that has been encountered is a lack of agreed indicators for assessing prevalence and monitoring actions, for example on the empowerment of women and girls, the enforcement of rights or the use of protection measures in projects on violence against women. UNICEF has found that to be the case when attempting to assess and monitor the implementation of State party obligations at the national and subnational levels under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

29. Some entities have reported having mechanisms for defining and enforcing responsibility and accountability for mainstreaming gender. At FAO, an interdepartmental committee on women in development was established to function as the highest-level coordinating body on mainstreaming gender. A gender issues board advises the Executive Director of UNEP on the implementation of gender policies. At the World Bank, gender is one of the criteria applied in rating projects approved for funding. Projects are classified for their gender content on a scale of zero to two: 0 for projects which have no gender content; 1 for those with gender analysis only but no specific components to address gender issues, and 2 for those which show evidence of gender analysis and components addressed to gender disparities. That rating system is currently under revision to improve its effectiveness. Work is under way to refine performance indicators, and an external gender consultative group of gender specialists and representatives from women's organizations has been established. The WFP Gender Task Force, chaired by the WFP Deputy Executive Director, operates at a senior management level in the field and at headquarters. Funding proposals for WFP development and relief operations specify how women will be given a substantial voice in local decision-making committees on administration of food aid management, and also in bodies which administer the assets/benefits created. In contractual agreements with partners, WFP requires that attention be given to women's position in the management of food distribution and provides for women and children at risk to receive appropriate and adequate food.

30. Within the United Nations Secretariat, the Secretary-General has personally asked heads of United Nations entities to report on their efforts to mainstream gender. The Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women has been asked to assist in developing modalities for introducing gender analysis and gender balance into programmes and staffing policies. A number of discussions have already taken place in that regard, and responses to the Secretary-General's request have been received from the International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/WTO), UNFPA, the Department of Political Affairs, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the World Intellectual Property Organization, UNRISD, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNEP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

31. As part of the overall inter-agency concern that a strategic framework for dealing with countries in crisis be developed for greater coordination and consistency, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women was requested to chair an ad hoc inter-agency task force meeting on gender in Afghanistan. She also headed an inter-agency gender mission to Afghanistan, which assessed the gender situation and prepared a set of practical field-oriented guidelines with related indicators by which agencies could consistently apply the agreed upon principle-centred approach for programmes and projects, and could measure their progress towards achieving that objective. ECLAC organized meetings of mid-level and senior-level managers to create a commitment to institutionalizing a gender approach and going beyond a strictly women-component approach.

B. Gender analysis training

32. Many United Nations entities continue to train staff in the use of gender analysis and several have stepped up their efforts. Staff of the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat have participated in training for mainstreaming gender in various sectors.

UNFPA has conducted gender training for headquarters and field staff and national counterparts, and has supported the production of gender and population training manuals in three pilot countries, which will lead to the formulation of a prototype manual that may be adapted for use in other countries. With a view to promoting the incorporation of a gender dimension into the UNDAF exercise, two UNIFEM regional programme advisers have been trained as part of the global support team that is facilitating the UNDAF process in the first 19 pilot countries. ECLAC has planned workshops for technical staff and project experts to identify concrete ways to use gender analysis.

33. FAO has expanded the use of its international training package on gender analysis and forestry. The Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis Programme (SEAGA), which was developed by FAO with multilateral and bilateral collaboration, has contributed to strengthening socio-economic and gender analysis capacities at the national and local levels. Trainers have been taught to use SEAGA methodologies and tools. UNDP has trained gender focal points in its country offices, along with key government and non-governmental organization staff. UNDP has also begun to develop a training module on the gender consequences of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The ILO has conducted 20 gender training workshops in the region and three at headquarters for ILO staff and representatives of ILO constituents. New training material has been developed and the ILO briefing kit has been updated, while more resources have been allocated to gender training for ILO staff. WFP has organized four gender workshops in the regions and four at headquarters, drawing on a training module based on the first regional workshop on experience with female leadership in the southern Sudan and FAO gender analysis tools. National gender workshops were organized with counterparts and followed by preparation of gender action plans.

34. Drawing on existing training manuals, ECA has prepared a manual on gender mainstreaming to familiarize programme managers with gender concepts and gender terminology, and to assist them and their staff in mainstreaming gender in their programmes. The first of a series of gender mainstreaming training workshops was held for the African Centre for Women, cabinet staff and the gender focal points from subregional development centres and the divisions. Training for the rest of the ECA staff is planned for 1998. A reference centre, providing regularly updated information on the status of African women in the different critical areas of concern, will also be established. Habitat has developed a gender awareness building kit for in-house training. UNICEF has supported the development of training modules and local adaptations of the UNICEF gender training package for gender training of teachers, community-based volunteers, functionaries of municipalities, women leaders and non-governmental organizations.

C. Gender focal points

35. At the time of the Fourth World Conference on Women, a number of United Nations entities had focal points on women/gender programming, but few were located in the offices of executive heads or had easy access to central policy-making. Since the Conference, several entities have reduced gender focal points as part of downsizing. Others, like the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, have established new focal point arrangements. The Office has created a gender and human rights of women team with a view to developing an Office-wide structured approach to gender and human rights of women and to promoting systematic gender mainstreaming in all its activities. ECA has appointed gender focal points in all its subregional development centres. At ECA headquarters, gender focal points have been appointed at the level of divisions to assist in mainstreaming gender. Another Professional post has been added to the ILO Office of the Special Adviser on Women Workers' Questions at ILO headquarters.

36. Several entities have noted that a majority of their regional and country offices do not have full-time gender focal points, thus the responsibility for gender issues has been given to staff members with responsibilities for other programme areas who may not necessarily have the requisite expertise and commitment to gender. Others have established gender units/advisers in their regional and/or country offices. UNDP has established on a pilot basis, starting in Africa, national gender-in-development advisory posts. Within the context of a joint UNDP, UNIFEM and UNV project, UNV has mobilized resources for the funding of 20 UNV gender-in-development specialists to be assigned to UNDP country offices; 5 of those specialists are funded by the UNV Special Voluntary Fund. The ILO has created two additional posts of senior specialists on women and gender questions at the regional level, bringing the number of such posts to six. WFP has established a network of gender focal points at the country office, regional and headquarters levels. The creation of gender focal points has been noted by others to be essential for programming at the country and regional levels. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has mentioned that a serious constraint is the lack of consideration and incorporation of gender issues within its field operations,

mostly as a result of lack of training of monitors and qualified staff.

37. Where focal points serve on a part-time basis, it has been emphasized that their work on gender issues should be recognized and recorded in performance appraisals, and that given their importance in advocating and assisting in achieving gender mainstreaming in organizations, a systematic review of the role of focal points on gender and women's advancement is needed.

D. Mobilization and allocation of financial resources

38. Some entities, such as UNICEF, the Division for the Advancement of Women,, World Bank, UNIFEM and UNIDO, have reported on commitments made to increase spending on gender responsive activities. UNDP has confirmed its target of 10 per cent of global programme resources for gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women, along with commitments from various subprogrammes and in thematic areas, so that at least 20 per cent of its global budget will be dispersed in promoting the advancement of women. Each UNDP regional bureau and country office has agreed to allocate 20 per cent of its resources to the advancement of women. WFP has gone a long way towards meeting its target of devoting 60 per cent of country programme resources to women and girls in countries where gender statistics demonstrate a 25 per cent disadvantage of women as compared with men. A budget allocation of $1 million was made in 1997 by WFP to finance the gender action plans at the country and headquarters levels and, *inter alia*, to mainstream gender concerns in overall WFP policy, strategies, programming, monitoring and evaluation and training.

39. At the same time, it has been reported that a major obstacle to implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the system-wide medium-term plan is inadequate financial resources. This has been variously attributed to lack of or insufficient funds available to the United Nations agency itself, or from government agencies involved; reduced budgets due to the United Nations financial crisis; and lack of a smooth flow of donor funds and difficulties in obtaining funds on a timely basis. Lack of funds for follow-up and organization of further programmes has also been noted. Moreover, there is often no donor support for capacity-building for gender mainstreaming, i.e., for core budgets for women's groups and others who could implement gender-responsive projects. UNIFEM has found that there is high donor support for projects by women's groups from the South, but not for infrastructure and administration. Budget needs, therefore, make capacity-building and project work difficult to sustain. In some cases, the lack of resources has meant the delay and/or cancellation of certain projects. The ILO has noted that potential donors prefer to finance components of projects rather than the whole package. WHO has observed that there is a lack of adequate funding to attract suitable partners.

40. On the positive side, ESCAP has reported that it has a technical cooperation among developing countries trust fund which has helped finance activities on women and development and the private sector has also co-sponsored activities. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat has mobilized resources from the African Development Bank, two private corporations and non-governmental organizations. The Division for the Advancement of Women has received government contributions to its trust fund to support panellists and non-governmental organizations participation in the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, and to expand participation in expert group meetings, and to convene a gender mainstreaming workshop. ESCWA has used a collaborative mechanism with the League of Arab States and the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research to mobilize resources. To supplement its regular budget, a significant portion of the work programme of the ECA African Centre for Women is being implemented with funds contributed by bilateral and multilateral donors.

41. The collection of information on expenditures for gender-responsive programmes continues to be a major problem for the United Nations system. From the information received to date, it is apparent that the difficulties of collecting and collating data on expenditures for activities specific to women, as well as on activities that integrate gender, remain unchanged. Although awareness of the need to do so has increased, steps to facilitate the identification of expenditures that contribute to the advancement of women are still needed. UNDP has reported a lack of consistency in arriving at and classifying allocations, highlighting the imprecision of efforts to quantify and track specific budget allocations to gender mainstreaming. The estimation of expenditures on specific target groups continues to be complicated. The necessary methodology remains to be developed in relation to both targeted and mainstream activities. Other agencies have found that increasing decentralization of programming makes it more difficult to track overall expenditures.

E. Human resources

42. Renewed efforts to achieve gender balance in staffing have been made but are often thwarted by reform and cuts in resources. In 1997, high-level UNDP appointments of women to senior management positions included the posts of Director of the Office of Human Resources, Director of Finance, Director of Operations and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa. In the United Nations Secretariat, the percentage of women in the Professional category subject to geographical distribution increased from 34 per cent in 1995 to 36.6 per cent in 1997. Among the 28 departments and offices with over 20 staff reviewed, three have achieved or surpassed the goal of 50 per cent women overall in posts subject to geographical distribution: the Office of Human Resources Management, the Department of Administration and Management and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

43. At WFP, the number of female staff has increased through proactive recruitment and promotion and a better retention rate. At the P-5 level and above, 18.9 per cent of staff were women in 1996, compared with 9.2 per cent in 1992. Overall recruitment of female staff increased from 12 per cent during 1994 to 39 per cent during 1996. As of December 1996, female women are represented at the D-1(18.6 per cent), D-2(14.3 per cent), and ASG/USG(33 per cent) levels.

44. UNDCP has noted that there is little national technical expertise available in some countries to address the special needs of women drug abusers. Few women officers work in law enforcement and supply reduction areas of drug control. ILO contends that human capacity is seldom sufficient to be able to respond to the needs in the field. Moreover, the relatively small number of women working in the field severely limits experience-sharing activities.

F. Political and cultural obstacles

45. Political and cultural obstacles have been encountered at the national level, including political instability, unpreparedness of concerned governmental authorities, fragile and inflexible education systems, lack of political commitment and national will, resistance from those in power, and inadequate political commitment for the allocation of resources, all of which have led to delays and non-implementation of some projects. Political unrest affects the situation of women and the role of non-governmental organizations. One of the obstacles confronting projects for women in armed conflict is the extreme delicacy of the issues being addressed, such as rape, violence and genocide. In particular, it has been noted that there is often insufficient appreciation of the potential role of women in resolving issues leading to armed conflict.

46. UNIFEM sees the identification of key leverage points in governmental processes as an important prerequisite for effective gender mainstreaming. Most projects have to take into account cultural sensitivities and religious and traditional beliefs, some of which are used to create political obstacles. Language barriers for grass-roots women impede some projects. A few agencies have noted a lack of materials in all six official languages and of translators to conduct training programmes, due to insufficient funds. Sociocultural attitudes and resistance to women's social participation are described as obstacles. One entity has noted that "patriarchal society" is a barrier to successful project implementation in certain regions.

G. Delays in project implementation

47. Complicated and prolonged procedures for project approval and the long time-frame required for some projects have been reported as obstacles. Prolonged and lengthy negotiations with counterparts have caused delays in the start of some projects. The Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat, for instance, has found that staffing vacancies have delayed the completion of several projects. In some cases, changes in counterpart staff in the field have caused delays, while in others effectiveness has been curtailed because local women have so many responsibilities that it is difficult for them to take on new tasks.

H. Coordination

48. The coordination of system-wide efforts to implement the Beijing Platform for Action has been enhanced during the period under review by the establishment of the ACC Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (IACWGE), chaired by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and supported by the Division for the Advancement of Women. In September 1997, the Division organized a workshop on gender mainstreaming for members of IACWGE and the OECD Development Assistance Committee/Women in Development Group of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD DAC/WID). Over 60 participants attended the meeting, exchanged experiences on gender mainstreaming and developed important alliances

for the coordination of future work. IACWGE, which normally meets once a year, initiated efforts at its 1997 meeting, on the development of gender-sensitive indicators; the identification of effective methods for budgeting and accountability for women's equality; the collection of best practices for use at the community level to ensure coordinated gender mainstreaming; and the drafting of a mission statement for the ACC on gender mainstreaming. Despite limitations on the number of formal IACWGE meetings, a number of informal meetings were held, whenever the opportunity arose, at Istanbul and Geneva and in New York to exchange views and update members. In general, over the period under review, several entities have perceived that there is more extensive direct or indirect collaboration among the United Nations agencies, which has been attributed to the Fourth World Conference on Women, IACWGE and a greater recognition that agencies, by pooling knowledge, expertise and resources, can be more effective. Examples of such collaboration include the joint UNFPA/WHO/UNICEF statement on female genital mutilation; the work on core indicators; joint wall charts on particular aspects of women's issues; the Internet site, WomenWatch; and numerous instances of project co-financing, as well as joint development of gender training materials. There has also been an increase in collaborating and co-financing of technical meetings and seminars in a number of sectors.

49. Efforts have been made by the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division of the United Nations Secretariat to collaborate with and obtain requisite inputs from and respective programme perspectives of United Nations entities in connection with the preparation of the draft model strategies and practical measures on the elimination of violence against women, which propose action of a multidisciplinary nature. Inter-agency coordination to support an advocacy campaign on eradicating violence against women in Latin America has been initiated by UNIFEM, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations.

50. The regional commissions have undertaken various coordinating efforts. ESCAP was the Convener of the Regional Inter-Agency Committee for Asia and the Pacific for follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Africa Regional Coordinating Committee on the Integration of Women in Development, the name of which has been changed to African Committee on Women in Development, has been revitalized to increase its impact. In 1997, its terms of reference were revised to focus more on its comparative advantage of monitoring the implementation of the African and Global Platforms for Action at the regional and subregional levels. To enhance its capacity to play that role, its composition was also broadened to include such actors as members of non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society, as well as representatives of research, subregional and regional institutions. An ad hoc expert group meeting on gender networking was convened, at which strategies for networking based on the experience of the participants and on the role of the African Committee on Women in Development in the networking process among actors in different sectors were formulated in the areas of women's economic empowerment, women's human rights and women in decision-making. Other forms of coordination of the implementation process in Africa have included attending coordination and planning meetings of non-governmental organizations at the regional and subregional levels to share information and provide guidance, together with such organizations as the East African Subregional Support Initiatives, the African Women Development and Communication Network, and the Pan African Conference on Peace. There has been continued collaboration with the Organization of African Unity and the specialized agencies. An inter-agency task force on gender has been set up in Amman, with ESCWA and UNIFEM as Conveners. The task force has provided technical and financial support to the Arab Conference to formulate a unified programme of action and mechanism to follow up the Fourth World Conference on Women.

51. At the field level, progress has been made under the leadership of the resident coordinators in inter-agency coordination to follow up the Fourth World Conference on Women and other global conferences. However, work under way to define the UNDAF has yet fully to integrate women's equality as a key objective, and gender analysis needs to be more systematically applied during the project formulation stage at the country level. In a number of countries, inter-agency thematic groups on gender have been convened by UNIFEM regional programme advisers to coordinate follow-up to the Conference and joint activities to mainstream gender and support women's empowerment strategies. In Senegal, for instance, UNIFEM convened an inter-agency thematic group, involving United Nations agencies, bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations, to coordinate support to the government plan on implementation of the Platform for Action. UNFPA has emphasized the need for coordinated action with its United Nations system partners, bilateral donors, government ministries and the civil society, including the academic community, non-governmental organizations and the private sector at all appropriate levels, national, regional and international.

IV. Recommendations for further action

52. Based on the responses received and taking into account the evidence of increased cooperation among entities in order to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, a number of recommendations are set out below for further improving coordination by the United Nations system in implementing the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001 in the second half of the plan's term. The recommendations also reflect the conclusions of the workshop on gender mainstreaming held at Geneva in September 1997 with the participation of members of IACWGE and OECD DAC/WID, as well as the inter-agency workshop on follow-up to global conferences held at Turin in December 1997, which made proposals for strengthening United Nations country team capacity to support integrated and coordinated follow-up to United Nations world conferences. The recommendations further build on agreed conclusions 1997/2 on gender mainstreaming of the Economic and Social Council, which, a year after the Council approved the system-wide medium-term plan, proposed steps for mainstreaming gender analysis and for advancing the status of women in the work of the United Nations system as a whole. The recommendations for action by the United Nations system primarily suggest action that would further a coordinated and cohesive approach to the work of the United Nations system in relation to the system-wide medium-term plan and the Platform for Action, namely:

(a) Support the coordinated collection, packaging and dissemination of social and economic data disaggregated by sex, as well as gender-sensitive studies, guidelines and checklists, and develop and test women's empowerment indicators;

(b) Where not already in place, elaborate action plans or strategies for gender mainstreaming that clearly describe goals, tasks and accountability for gender mainstreaming at all levels;

(c) Encourage IACWGE to continue its efforts to propose a workable methodology for quantifying and tracking budget allocations made towards achieving gender equality, based on the experience of various organizations, including in reviewing progress in the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan;

(d) Identify, on a system-wide basis, the competencies and capacities required for gender mainstreaming, and propose strategies for closing gaps through investment in training, coaching and mentoring to enable staff to work with gender analysis tools;

(e) Ensure that staffing policies throughout the United Nations system, whether recruiting or promoting women or men, fully reflect the need for gender competence and gender equality;

(f) Conduct a comparative analysis of the role of gender specialists, focal points and/or gender units in efforts to bring about change and in increasing effectiveness in programming for gender equality as a basis for preparing guidelines on gender focal points;

(g) Make full use, as appropriate, of available expertise, including the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM and INSTRAW, for the design, monitoring and evaluation of gender responsive policies and programmes;

(h) Employ inter-agency coordination mechanisms and bodies within the United Nations, such as the executive committees set up by the Secretary-General in the framework of the reform process and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) bodies, including the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions and the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development, to promote an increasingly coordinated overall approach to gender mainstreaming;

(i) Continue to improve inter-agency coordination for gender mainstreaming and advancement of women at the field level, through the IACWGE, UNDG and UNDAF processes and products, in sectoral and cross-sectoral areas, including for rural women;

(j) Strengthen the exchange of experience and cooperation on gender issues at the regional level, in particular through the regional commissions and their meetings of regional representatives of members of ACC;

(k) Identify and disseminate positive examples and practical lessons learned with respect to gender mainstreaming;

(l) Provide assistance to countries in building gender competencies cross-sectorally, and in establishing systems of accountability for gender mainstreaming;

(m) Develop principles and guidelines for strengthening cooperation with non-governmental organizations active on gender issues, both in advocacy and project implementation.

Notes

[1] The Committee for Programme and Coordination, when it considered the plan, raised a question about activities for rural women. For the present review, rural women are reported to be a major target group of United Nations activities, and although much of the work with respect to rural women has been reported under "Women and poverty", activities have also been reported under other critical areas, including "Women and the economy" and "Women and education".

Annex

Highlights of information on implementation in the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action, as supplied by responding United Nations entities

1. Activities being undertaken by entities that contributed to the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001, and by other entities that have since reported on their related activities, are set out below. In presenting the information, two of the headings employed by the Plan, "Information collection and database development" and "Research and analysis", have been combined for the sake of brevity. The third and fourth headings, "Operational activities, including advisory services, technical assistance and training" and "Public information and outreach", have been retained in the present report, except in chapter X, "Women and the media", in which they have been combined. Due to page limitations, it has been necessary to provide only the highlights of the wealth of information provided by responding entities, with emphasis on the nature of the activities undertaken and in most cases without naming the specific countries where activities were carried out. The detailed responses are available on request from the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat.

I. Women and poverty

Information collection, database development, research and analysis

2. During the period under review, ILO developed a database on the socio-economic characteristics of home workers; conducted in-depth case studies; and completed a synthesis of policy guidelines for integrating a gender perspective in social fund programmes. UNDP, in collaboration with UNRISD, embarked on comparative research on indicators of poverty and well-being sensitive to gender differences and strategies to combat poverty that promote gender equality. The research explored the gender implications of labour intensive growth strategies and the impact of redistributive policies on gender well-being, and included a gender analysis of selective anti-poverty programmes, such as public works, microcredit, and women and land rights. UNFPA supported strengthening national capacities to study the relationship between gender, population and poverty and to formulate and manage projects in this area. A study on food, population and women was prepared.

3. The Division for the Advancement of Women contributed gender-specific inputs to the Economic and Social Council report on poverty, and prepared a policy report on rural women. ESCAP completed studies on female workers in the informal sector, and formulated policy recommendations on improving the status of women living under conditions of poverty. Research on gender indicators in poverty profiles was presented by the United Nations Statistic Division at an ECLAC seminar on poverty and statistics in 1997. ECLAC concluded research on the relationship between sustainable development, poverty and gender. ECA is conducting a survey in six countries on access by rural and urban women to resources, and on mechanisms for management and distribution of those resources, especially land and technology. ESCWA has made progress in developing a gender disaggregated database covering social issues, convened an expert group meeting that addressed, *inter alia*, women and poverty, and carried out exploratory studies in that area.

Operational activities

4. FAO advised member States on increasing rural women's access to productive resources and services, and completed gender-sensitive training materials on improving extension work with rural women based on country case studies. UNIDO developed and disseminated a conceptual multi-purpose "platform" (agro-processing unit), which was managed by women's groups assisting village communities in establishing an integrated support system for rural women, consisting of literacy and numeracy training, technical training, credit, repair and maintenance schemes. IFAD implemented gender projects on nutrition, land issues, credit and food security. UNIFEM helped to establish women's enterprises, and funded credit, investment and income-generating activities for women, and for strengthening entrepreneurial skills. It also sought to apply science and technology to meet the needs of women living in poverty. UNDP, with the assistance of the Japanese Fund for Women in Development, initiated women's economic empowerment programmes, including access to credit. UNV built

partnerships with women's grass-roots organizations supporting community-based initiatives and income-generating activities, undertook literacy programmes in rural areas and projects to improve the living conditions of disadvantaged women and youth, and established a number of women's handicraft industries, including the marketing of handicraft production. WFP India joined other United Nations bodies, such as ILO, UNIFEM and UNDP, in organizing regional workshops for non-governmental organizations, government banks and credit agencies on best practices regarding microcredit for women.

5. ILO developed a programme of capacity-building for employment promotion, gender equality and poverty eradication, including a modular training package for policy makers and practitioners. It implemented training programmes on employment promotion, and appraised the gender dimension of social fund programmes in Latin America and Africa. A workshop on the gender dimensions of social programmes was organized, and home workers' organizations are being established. A series of advisory missions was undertaken to formulate strategies for promoting women's employment in the context of economic reform and restructuring. A participatory poverty alleviation pilot project aimed at rural women's employment is under way in Africa.

6. UNEP completed a project on training in the construction and use of fuel-saving stoves to assist women living in impoverished conditions in Africa. The Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries of the United Nations Secretariat funded training on accessing credit and supported African follow-up to the Microcredit Summit. UNDP supported the Microcredit Summit and the meet-the-challenge sessions on the use of microcredit as a tool for the economic empowerment of women, and launched MICROSTART, a pilot programme in 25 countries to strengthen micro-finance institutions in their operations, at least 40 per cent of whose total borrowers are women.

7. UNESCO collaborated with other United Nations agencies and local non-governmental organizations and Governments in nine highly populated countries, illustrating how community development programmes tailored to meet the specific needs of women can contribute to combating poverty and marginalization and improving the quality of life for rural women. UNHCR, in its efforts to integrate refugee/returnee women in post-conflict reconstruction and development, has introduced microcredit schemes/small grants and skill training for microenterprise development. Shelter and other forms of basic needs and material assistance were also provided to alleviate poverty.

8. Women-specific and mainstream ITC trade development projects in Africa and Asia focused on developing group-level entrepreneurship for poor rural women, assisting small businesses in export development, and capacity-building of national mainstream and women's institutions to undertake export promotion activities and deliver trade support services.

9. The Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and the Denial of Human Rights, with the assistance of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights , organized a seminar that reinforced the view that women are disproportionately represented among those living in extreme poverty. The Special Rapporteur on Income Distribution examined the question of income distribution and gender discrimination, noting that income distribution is commonly measured by household and thus conceals the situation of discrimination often encountered by women.

10. UNFPA provided reproductive health education and services to poor, young and adult women living in rural and in urban areas, with the goal of reducing poverty, improving poor people's well-being and health, and enhancing their status. Microcredit activities that aim to enhance women's economic status are very often integrated into the regular reproductive health/family planning projects. UNFPA participated in the Microcredit Summit, and launched a global campaign to reach the world's poorest women. An internal guidance note on population and poverty alleviation suggested effective interventions to help alleviate poverty through its three thematic areas of reproductive health, population, and development strategies and advocacy.

11. ECLAC offered substantive servicing of a regional seminar, an ad hoc committee and a subregional ministerial conference on the issue of poverty and human settlements, reproductive health and the eradication of poverty; gave technical assistance to a number of Caribbean Governments on sustainable human development and the eradication of poverty, and created a poverty matrix. ESCWA, with UNV and the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations, have completed two community development projects focused on integrating rural women in development.

Public information and outreach

12. The Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat, through its information centres at the country level, sponsored seminars, workshops, panel discussions and lectures, and distributed printed materials on women and poverty to the media, Governments and the

public. FAO commemorated World Rural Women's Day, and produced videos on rural women and food security and on women farmers. UNV produced a video entitled "Portraits of Lao women", featuring poor women. ESCAP promoted a better understanding of the role of science and technology in alleviating poverty, including that of poor women. ILO incorporated public outreach in many of its activities. During the World Food Summit, FAO hosted special seminars on gender issues, and published a number of reports on gender. The themes for International Women's Day in 1996 and 1997 were "Empowering women, feeding humanity" and "Mainstreaming rural women as agents of food security". UNESCO participated and financially supported the creation of a women's information centre, whose main purpose is the dissemination of information on the rights of women. To mark International Women's Day 1997, ECA, as part of an inter-agency and donor community group at Addis Ababa, organized a week-long programme on the topic "Feminization of poverty". UNAIDS prepared an advocacy paper on the feminization of poverty related to AIDS in India.

II. Education and training of women

Information collection, database development, research and analysis

13. Sex-disaggregated statistics related to education continued to be supplied periodically to the United Nations Statistics Division. The Division for the Advancement of Women, in collaboration with ILO, held an expert group meeting on vocational training and lifelong learning of women, and the results were made available to the Commission on the Status of Women in 1997. Habitat published *Women Constructing Their Lives*, which was based on case studies and contained an evaluation and concrete proposals for women's participation in the non-traditional (for women) field of construction. UNESCO convened an international conference on adult education, on the theme "Adult learning: a key for the twenty-first century", at which the empowerment of women through adult education was discussed, and it was recommended that at least six per cent of member States' gross national product be allocated to education, with an equitable share set aside for adult learning. UNAIDS has supported sexuality and HIV/AIDS education, as well as a study which showed that sexuality education delays the onset of sexual activity.

14. ECLAC prepared documentation on educational policies for women on the integration of women into the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as a document on female human resources development. It also undertook field research on the presence of sex stereotypes in the formal education of young children. The Joint ECLAC/UNIDO Industrial and Technological Development Unit prepared a proposal on how to include gender-related topics in projects to improve the quality, efficiency and relevance of technical and professional training.

Operational activities

15. Besides promoting the right of women and girls to education as a fundamental human right and a key to development, UNESCO focused on the education of women and girls within the context of rural communities. A comprehensive effort was made to link formal and non-formal educational activities and to tailor them to the needs and aspirations of the community. In cooperation with the Arab Gulf Fund for United Nations Development and local women non-governmental organizations, UNESCO supported rural community centres as teaching/learning centres for women and girls in order to use more effectively different methods of non-formal education for women. UNESCO education projects for women and girls in Africa to implement paragraph 87 of the Beijing Platform for Action included training for trainers of teachers, social workers and non-formal educators on how to help girls cope with social and economic changes in their societies.

16. UNICEF undertook activities in support of girls' education, including bilingual education programmes serving 50,000 girls and mothers in one country. Enrolment of girls in community schools increased in another country from 30 per cent to 70 per cent by reducing the distance needed for girls to travel to school, particularly in rural areas, encouraging the return by pregnant girls to school after the birth of a baby. Other successful training programmes were mounted, including teacher training. The number of girls enrolled in formal school systems in many developing countries has significantly increased as a result of UNICEF activities. The WHO Global Commission on Women's Health is preparing a round table on health and education in collaboration with UNESCO, with a focus on girls' education and health. An ESCAP women's literacy project resulted in a handbook that is widely used, and skill gaps were identified to promote the participation of women in industrial and technological development.

17. ILO conducted training activities for women in rural and marginal urban areas to improve opportunities for

women in employment and production. UNDP undertook numerous projects to promote women's literacy, education for sustainable livelihoods and multisectoral approaches to basic learning. UNDP supported projects on gender-sensitive education and girls' and women's education (UNDP also addressed trainers in formal and non-formal social work); training on guidance and counselling services; and enhancing the access of girls to science, technical and vocational education and awareness of the relationship between science, technology, health, environment and society. It reinforced research on gender issues, and improved the access of women to scientific and technological education, training and careers. WFP approved around $70 million in food aid support to six education projects, of which 50 per cent was committed to girls and women, and budgets were adjusted to support girls' education in all extension projects. WFP operational guidelines on food aid support to the education sector included guidance on advocacy and investments to reduce gender gaps at the government, schools and community levels in design and through monitoring of food aid support. UNHCR has supported adult literacy and numeracy classes for refugees, and together with WFP has devised incentives to promote enrolment and retention of girls in schools, and to delay early marriage and childbearing.

18. UNFPA provided support for information, education and communication activities on reproductive health and gender equality within the formal and informal educational system by using traditional and mass media, encompassing revision of curricula to incorporate concepts of family life education and population education, gender equality and mutual respect, tolerance and respect for human rights. It assisted advocacy activities to ensure primary and secondary education for girls, and contributed to strengthening government and non-governmental organizations' capacity to teach young and adult women their rights to enable them to take care of their sexual and reproductive health. It helped to sensitize men about women's sexual and reproductive rights, and their paramount responsibility in promoting gender equality, eliminating violence against women and girls, and sharing responsibilities in public and private life.

Public outreach and information dissemination

19. A major focus of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1997 was its historic role in initiating decisions that promoted the advancement of women towards the goal of equality in all areas, particularly in decision-making in the secretariats of the United Nations and in Member States. As part of the commemoration, the Secretary-General honoured the former secretaries-general of the four world conferences on women, former chairpersons of the Commission and other prominent women who played a major part in the history of United Nations efforts for the advancement of women and who as role models had a positive impact on improving the status of women worldwide. Activities of the Department of Public Information included raising awareness of the need for education and training for women and girls and awareness-raising about the Beijing Platform for Action and the 12 critical areas of concern. UNICEF supported advocacy for girls' education throughout North Africa and the Middle East through a group of influential female educators, and initiated a global girls' education communication strategy. WFP, in collaboration with UNESCO, made a presentation entitled "WFP food aid in support of education of women and girls in Africa: past experiences and future action" at an African conference on the empowerment of women through functional literacy of the girl child. Increased awareness has also been created by UNIDO among project analysts, government departments and private-sector entities about the special needs and interests of women, which require attention in planning and implementing industrial development projects.

III. Women and health

Information collection, database development, research and analysis

20. The United Nations Statistics Division developed 10 indicators on reproductive health. WHO continued to collect information and develop databases on women and substance abuse, maternal mortality and morbidity, anaemia, unsafe abortion, sexual abuse and rape, and female genital mutilation, as well as other forms of violence against women and their health consequences. UNICEF recently updated information on iron/folate supplement use by pregnant women in developing countries. The Population Division undertook several analytical studies that dealt with various aspects of reproductive rights and reproductive health. WHO is undertaking research on the prevalence of violence against women in families and its health implications, and research projects on the impact of tropical diseases on women. WHO involved women's groups in its reproductive health research, producing a technical paper on gender and health and a

manual for health-care workers in the area of substance abuse.

21. As lead agency for the Task Force on Basic Social Services for All working group on reproductive health, WHO forged consensus around a short list of reproductive health indicators for global monitoring, to be complemented by guidelines on the generation and interpretation of the indicators. To strengthen national capacities for information analysis, WHO is field-testing a guideline on the process of selecting reproductive health indicators for use at the district level. To promote increased understanding of measurement issues in relation to maternal mortality, WHO and UNICEF jointly produced guidance notes on methodology for potential users of maternal mortality data. WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA issued guidelines on process indicators for monitoring access to essential obstetric care. WHO continued to maintain its extensive databases on women's reproductive health, and has issued revised estimates of maternal mortality, coverage of maternity care, and incidence of and mortality from unsafe abortion. A wall chart on aspects of maternal health care around the world was produced with World Bank support.

22. UNHCR has undertaken comprehensive programmes on reproductive health for refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda, and inter-agency efforts have yielded a field manual on reproductive health for refugee women and an emergency reproductive health kit. UNEP developed tools to assist decision makers in considering environmental health issues, including case studies, methodologies and a teaching textbook on environmental health impact assessment. ILO updated and revised maternal health recommendations and standards, which are expected to be widely ratifiable. UNDCP encouraged research on the subject of gender implications of drug abuse by establishing an award for outstanding work. FAO undertook a study on the effects of HIV/AIDS on agricultural production systems and rural livelihoods in West Africa. ECLAC completed a study on women's health in Latin America and the Caribbean, and included a request for statistics disaggregated by sex in a project on reforms of the financing of the region's national health systems.

Operational activities

23. One of UNFPA's primary programme priorities is to help ensure universal access to reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, to all couples and individuals. Approximately 50 per cent of UNFPA programme expenditures/allocations were devoted to reproductive health activities. UNFPA worked with Governments and non-governmental organizations to provide, *inter alia*, reproductive health information, counselling and services for women and men as well as for adolescents and youth; training for medical and paramedical staff, midwives, traditional birth attendants and community agents; contraceptives supplies and medical equipment; and support for the construction and renovation of medical facilities. Substantial support was provided for the Safe Motherhood Initiative and for the eradication of harmful traditional practices, including female genital mutilation; sex selection; female foeticide and infanticide. UNAIDS has advocated for attention to be paid to the gender dimension of the HIV epidemic, as well as for female-controlled methods for the prevention of HIV. Globally, UNFPA assistance has resulted in reducing maternal and child mortality and morbidity. UNFPA provides support for national HIV/AIDS prevention programmes in line with national HIV/AIDS policies.

24. UNICEF convened training workshops and meetings to address problems associated with maternal mortality. In cooperation with other agencies, such as UNFPA, safe motherhood programmes at the country level were strengthened. The Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat provided technical advice and assistance to country projects supported by UNFPA dealing with reproductive health issues. In several countries, UNDP facilitated pilot programmes on reducing the economic impact of AIDS. UNIFEM provided technical advisory services. UNV assisted in setting up a microcredit fund in one country aimed at reducing maternal and infant mortality rates by improving socio-economic conditions, and did health-care training, including providing information about sexually transmitted diseases (STD) and HIV/AIDS. Volunteer activities focused on the inclusion of rural women through participatory approaches and techniques.

25. WHO continued to support national authorities and multilateral and bilateral partners in the development, implementation and evaluation of reproductive health programmes. In its normative role, WHO defined essential elements of maternal health care, including antenatal care, post-partum care and care in normal delivery. Essential practice guides for the care of women during pregnancy and childbirth were being developed. Support to countries for the use of syndromic approach for the management of sexually transmitted infections was being strengthened. To support clinical interventions, WHO was developing related managerial guidelines in sexual and reproductive health that cover needs assessment, training, supervision, logistics, monitoring and evaluation.

26. UNESCO developed a special programme for preventive education and communication designed for societies in which men traditionally have a dominant role and women therefore have little control over their sexual behaviour and reproductive function. Workshops for grass-roots level women's organizations to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS were designed to equip illiterate and neo-literate women with the knowledge and skills to protect themselves and their families from the epidemic. UNESCO was implementing, jointly with WHO/Global Programme on Aids, pilot projects in education for the prevention of AIDS and integrating AIDS education into population education projects. The Population Division undertook two country missions to provide technical advice and assistance in dealing with reproductive health issues, as well as one mission to evaluate the demographic impact of family planning programmes.

27. ILO organized seminars and training in Central and Eastern Europe on preventing substance abuse in the workplace. With the support of UNFPA, ECE carried out a project on partnership and reproductive behaviour. In keeping with its educational role in the global fight against AIDS, UNESCO provided support to Governments for policy and planning, especially in curriculum development related to HIV/AIDS. WFP launched the Women's Health and Micro-nutrient Facility, financed by the Canadian Government, thus strengthening projects to improve the nutritional and health status of women and children.

Public outreach and information dissemination

28. The Department of Public Information activities on women and health ranged from the production of a background article on the right to reproductive health to a host of seminars, lectures, radio and television programmes, and newspaper articles on various aspects of women's health issues, including HIV/AIDS. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) convened the Second International Consultation on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, which aimed to elaborate guidelines on promoting and protecting respect for human rights in the context of HIV/AIDS. UNICEF promoted radio programmes aimed at women, which discussed the rights of girls in the areas of health and education and aired at popular times. WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA issued a policy statement on female genital mutilation, and the Division for the Advancement of Women ensured that this information was available on WomenWatch, the Internet gateway to the United Nations information on women. Reference materials on eligibility criteria for the use of contraceptives have been developed and widely disseminated by WHO. UNEP included gender issues in nine publications it produced assessing emerging environmental health issues. UNDP, within the context of the UNAIDS inter-agency working group on gender and HIV, is preparing publications to increase understanding and encourage more effective action among policy makers and practitioners concerning gender issues and the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

29. UNDCP encouraged women and girls to have a positive self-image, detect signs and symptoms of substance abuse, and find support for substance abuse problems, and produced a video on the gender aspects of substance abuse. UNICEF increased awareness at the country level on women's health, resulting in resource allocations and systematic planning for women's access to health services. At the international level, UNICEF advocacy has facilitated commitments from bilateral and multilateral donors for women's health in country programmes, as well as a focus on communication and increasing women's access to information about good health practices. WHO continued to advocate for sound evidence-based approaches to reproductive health through, for example, its newsletter *Safe Motherhood*.

30. The Population Division provided information related to women and health to end-users on a regular basis. UNFPA mounted advocacy programmes at the global, regional and national levels for gender equity and equality, women's empowerment and the eradication of harmful traditional practices, sex selection, female foeticide and infanticide.

31. UNESCO produced numerous posters and leaflets for special occasions, such as World AIDS Day, as well as studies on specific topics, such as AIDS and street children. Special attention is being given to integrating AIDS education in materials, guidelines and manuals produced or sponsored by UNESCO, including an HIV/AIDS/STDs education for prevention brochure, summarizing the main outcomes of an international conference on school health education and HIV/AIDS prevention.

IV. Violence against women

Information collection, database development, research and analysis

32. The Division for the Advancement of Women, in collaboration with a non-governmental organization, commissioned regional studies on concrete measures being taken to combat violence against women and on the implementation of the actions called for in the Platform for Action, with funds granted by the UNIFEM Trust Fund on Violence against Women, as an input to the forty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women. UNICEF collected information at the country level on measures to combat violence against women, such as social services provided by police and juries for women who have experienced violence. UNIFEM supported the compilation and analysis of information on laws in Muslim countries and their effects on women, particularly regarding violence, and supported national women's groups in creating and maintaining databases and information dissemination on violence against women. The WHO Global Commission on Women's Health compiled international texts on domestic violence. Habitat supported research on urban violence from a gender perspective. The Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division of the United Nations Secretariat prepared a new international instrument on violence against women — Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice — which was adopted by the Economic and Social Council and continued its technical advisory activities. UNICRI analysed the results of its international crime (victim) survey, which focused on women victims of violence.

33. The Special Rappo teur on Violence against Women presented an analysis of violence against women in the community, including rape and sexual harassment, trafficking and forced prostitution, and violence against women migrant workers, a report supplemented by reports on field missions to Poland on trafficking and forced prostitution, to Brazil on domestic violence against women, and to South Africa on the issue of rape in the community. The Special Rapporteur also developed a framework for model legislation on domestic violence to be used by national legislators in developing legislation in this field.

Operational activities

34. INSTRAW was developing a manual for the training of personnel who deal with victims of gender-based violence. WHO was undertaking a multi-country study on violence against women, and will study successful strategies for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and for an appropriate and sensitive health sector response to women experiencing violence. WHO convened a technical working group and other consultations on female genital mutilation. In Rwanda, WHO convened a workshop to identify training needs in violence against women, and is developing training modules for health workers. UNICRI provided training of trainers on domestic violence for practitioners in the criminal justice system. UNHCR has introduced crisis intervention programmes for sexual violence experienced by refugee women. UNIFEM operationalized the $1.2 million Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, funding grass- roots, national, regional and global projects in its first year. UNDP, in collaboration with UNICEF and UNIFEM, supported a subregional consultation in Asia with law makers, academics and policy makers to combat violence against women. Combating violence against women is an intervention area within the regional gender programmes for Latin America, Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States countries. ECLAC participated in seminars and postgraduate courses on the issue of family and urban violence, and presented monitoring proposals for a national legislation on domestic violence.

Public outreach and information dissemination

35. The Department of Public Information issued a new version of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. UNIFEM supported the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women's mission, which raised awareness about the issues of concern to grass-roots women advocates. UNICEF completed the distribution of information materials, such as posters, booklets and a video film, to increase awareness at all levels, including policy levels, in South Asia and other regions, and facilitated networking among non-governmental organizations and other grass-roots organizations to deal with violence against women. UNFPA supported various advocacy and legislative initiatives aimed at preventing violence against women, including the production of literature and audio-visual material; the organization of various forums with

parliamentarians to call attention to the need for adequate legislative and enforcement measures on gender-based violence; and support for men's groups to advocate for responsible parenthood, gender equality and respect for women's human rights, including the right to freedom from violence. The WHO Global Commission on Women's Health undertook the wide dissemination of a statement on violence against women, stressing zero tolerance. WHO produced an information pack on violence against women and updated one on female genital mutilation. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women was widely disseminated by the Department of Public Information. UNAIDS, the World Bank and UNICEF have initiated a series of issue papers on HIV/AIDS, including one on gender-based violence and its relation to HIV/AIDS. UNHCR has produced a field manual on sexual violence against refugees, and has conducted advocacy campaigns on domestic violence and female genital mutilation. ECLAC published an update of information on gender-based violence in Latin America and the Caribbean, and prepared a study on the evolution of legal treatment of violence against women. ECA was a co-organizer of the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children Symposium.

V. Women and armed conflict

Information collection, database development, research and analysis

36. The Division for the Advancement of Women worked closely with women's and human rights non-governmental organizations to support data collection on women and girls affected by armed conflict, especially rape victims for use by the war tribunals, and held an expert group meeting on gender-based persecution. An expert group meeting on male roles and masculinities in the perspective of a culture of peace was convened by UNESCO, and several case-studies were completed on women's traditional conflict resolution and mediating techniques and practices. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the territories of former Yugoslavia paid particular attention to vulnerable groups, including women, in her reporting, and raised the issue of rape as a weapon of war. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights prepared its annual report on rape and abuse of women in the areas of conflict in former Yugoslavia. The Special Rapporteur of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities addressed women and sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. UNHCR has designed special programmes for the protection of women at risk, including removal to a safe place. Support has been provided to women's peace non-governmental organizations, and UNHCR led a United Nations inter-agency effort to document best practices with respect to women and peace-building. ESCWA has undertaken studies on women and peace in the region, and held a meeting on the role of non-governmental organizations in peace accords.

Operational activities

37. UNIFEM promoted a gender-sensitive approach to conflict resolution and the management and resolution of conflict through capacity-building and training of women's peace movements, and supported training for women in traumatic situations caused by wars and civil strife. UNICEF identified five areas for policy action and programme implementation for women victims of armed conflict, including the identification of specific needs of women and girls in reproductive health, nutrition, education, psycho-social counselling, and the protection of the rights of girls and women within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the participation of women in decision-making in the management of services in refugee camps. UNFPA projects helped to strengthen and develop women's negotiating and advocacy skills. In Africa, the urgent reproductive health needs of women in refugee and emergency situations were the focus of joint activities of UNFPA, UNICEF and UNHCR to provide emergency reproductive health care to displaced persons and refugees in Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire, undertaken in collaboration with other relief agencies. UNHCR has provided training to refugee women in leadership skills and mediation for conflict resolution. Similar activities were undertaken by UNFPA in the Arab States, the European region and in Central American countries. UNICEF collaborated with UNFPA, WHO and several non-governmental organizations in carrying out its activities in this critical area.

38. Habitat and INSTRAW organized a round table discussion on women and human settlements in conflict zones. UNIDO developed a conceptual and comprehensive policy framework on employment promotion and skills training in conflict situations. ILO emphasized capacity-building for its constituents in the planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes to train and employ conflict-affected groups. A compendium

of major training and employment-related initiatives in countries emerging from armed conflict has been developed. WHO participated in a number of activities and workshops, which focused on the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of children and women affected by armed conflict, and provided health care and nutrition. WHO provided accessible health services for women affected by violence during armed conflict in such countries as Rwanda, Burundi and Mozambique, and provided training sessions on counselling and ensured that essential drugs and medical equipment were available.

39. Among the FAO multidisciplinary teams in charge of the rehabilitation programme for the agricultural sector in Rwanda, there was a women in development specialist. UNDP promoted the inclusion of women in the development of public policy, plans and programmes for the implementation of peace accords. Women's increasing initiatives in conflict resolution, their struggle for democracy and human rights, and their increasingly prominent role in sustaining economic and social development placed them at the core of the UNESCO Mediterranean and Culture of Peace Programme. ECA assisted in the organization of an inter-agency workshop on documented best practices of women in peace-building and non-violent means of conflict resolution, and collaborated with OAU and the Government of Nigeria to organize a first ladies' summit on peace and humanitarian issues at Abuja, which sought to define the role of women in the promotion of peace. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement for Women addressed the summit. ECA also collaborated with the Government of Rwanda and other United Nations agencies in organizing a Pan-African conference on peace, gender and development at Kigali. A women leadership forum on peace was also organized by ECA, in collaboration with OAU, other United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations.

40. WFP undertook training needs assessments to develop training modules and a core group of WFP staff were trained to improve women's participation in emergency and relief food aid management and actual distribution. Technical and financial assistance was provided to reduce micro-nutrient deficiencies in women and adolescents at risk through the new Women's Health and Nutrition Programme. Sensitization training was initiated for staff and counterparts on gender and participation and their implications for WFP-supported emergency and relief operations. WFP initiated training of local authorities and women's committees in food distribution in several countries.

Public outreach and information dissemination

41. The Department of Public Information awareness-raising activities highlighted women's roles as peacemakers. A panel on women at the peace table was organized for International Women's Day, 1997. A technical publication entitled *Women and the Peace Process: Perspectives from Africa* was prepared by ECA for a women's leadership forum on peace in South Africa. The UNESCO culture of peace radio programme for and with women in El Salvador met the concerns and interests of women in fighting violence on all levels of society, developing gender sensitivity on a broad basis. A film on the *Pro Femmes Twese Hamwe* initiative for peace in Rwanda was made by UNESCO, and extrabudgetary funds are being sought in order to film other women's initiatives for peace around the world that could be developed for teaching purposes. A booklet on women and a culture of peace was finalized, inviting women and women's organizations to cooperate with UNESCO in a global movement for a culture of peace.

VI. Women and the economy

Information collection, database development, research and analysis

42. The Division for the Advancement of Women organized an expert group meeting on women and economic decision-making in international financial institutions and transnational corporations, focused on women's role, particularly in top management, in preparation for the Commission on the Status of Women. INSTRAW carried out research on women's time-use surveys, and generated a methodology for such surveys. The Population Division incorporated gender-specific data into a statistical database on international migration, and collaborated with other United Nations bodies in a number of projects to incorporate gender-sensitive data and indicators into economic statistics. A classification system for use on a trial basis that is sensitive to the differences between women and men in remunerated and unremunerated work was developed. ESCAP published a study entitled "Improving the access of women to formal credit and financial institutions: windows of opportunities", which includes country studies on five least developed countries. In its *Statistical Profiles*, ESCAP also published profiles on women in eight countries, containing data on women in the economy, family life and public life. ILO conducted an action programme on labour

and social issues relating to export processing zones, with special attention to problems specific to women workers, and ILO also launched an international programme entitled "More and better jobs for women", designed to heighten global concern for the quality and quantity of employment for women.

43. ILO implemented an action programme to promote gender equality in five countries with a view to promoting gender equality through labour administration. FAO trained statisticians to collect disaggregated data for the year 2000 World Agricultural Census, and training materials were produced. The UNDP Africa Regional Programme had women's economic advancement as a focus area, and many UNDP country programmes supported the economic empowerment of women through credit and entrepreneurship initiatives. That was also a focus area of the UNDP Japan Women-in-Development Fund. UNDP, in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division, supported a new project for engendering labour market statistics and the valuing of women's paid and unpaid work. UNIFEM placed emphasis on broadening understanding of the impact of trade liberalization on women's employment and livelihoods, and assisted advocacy for policy changes, as well as bargaining for increased access to credit, technology and markets. That included providing support to business women's associations and to grass-roots producers/traders in the informal sector. UNIFEM supported trade unions and workshops in increasing the capacity of women to influence trade negotiations and research and analysis in government budgeting in enhancing policy-making to ensure that budgets reflect the interests and concerns of the entire population.

44. UNU undertook a research project on the teleworking implications for employment and trade in developing countries, with a focus on gender and social equity. The project highlighted the impact of telecommunication technologies on the globalization process, and assessed the potential and challenges of such globalization on employment opportunities for women as well as the impact of major policies on the effective participation of women in the development process. A study entitled "Economic empowerment of women and their role in the socio-economic development of Africa" was produced by ECA. ECLAC prepared studies on such issues as female urban work in Latin America; social policies, family and work; the integration of women into the new economic model; field research on gender aspects of the labour market's informal sector; and how to analyse national data to prepare a set of indicators that would be useful for looking at the labour market from a gender perspective.

Operational activities

45. UNIDO developed a high impact programme for women entrepreneurship development, and addressed economic empowerment of women in integrated technical assistance programmes aimed at increased competitiveness of women's business, mainly in Africa. Technical and managerial training materials for women entrepreneurs in food-processing industries, together with the training of trainers approach, were developed. ESCAP promoted women's participation in economic development and capacity to handle challenges arising from the globalization of the economy. ECE undertook a project on small and medium-scale enterprises. UNV supported training workshops, including workshops that identify opportunities for women in small business and credit scheme management. ESCWA, in collaboration with UNIFEM, organized workshops for women on starting a business and business incubators.

46. UNICEF supported credit-linked economic activities for rural and urban women in its country programmes as integral components of projects of a wider scope, such as increased literacy, provision of child care, legal literacy and the economic empowerment of women. IFAD included components for savings and loans for women in many of its projects. The United Nations Statistics Division held expert group meetings on the statistics of the informal sector, household satellite accounting and household accounts in selected developing countries, including discussion of gender aspects of relevant statistics and indicators. UNDP had activities on small credit and microcredit, women's entrepreneurship and capacity-building for the female labour force, including female labour based in rural areas. ILO promoted women in private-sector activities through employers' associations and published guidelines. ILO also organized a tripartite meeting on the glass ceiling and women in management to discuss practical strategies to increase upward mobility and career opportunities for professional and managerial women. ILO further established employment promotion networks to enable women to take advantage of the employment and income opportunities opened up by economic reform and measures; developed projects to improve working conditions and establish social protection schemes for women home workers; facilitated institutionalization of home workers' organizations and implementation of cooperative insurance schemes; and assisted employers' organizations in designing policies and conducting programmes to increase the participation of women managers and women entrepreneurs.

47. UNESCO worked to upgrade the technical skills and know-how of craftswomen. FAO organized workshops on the integration of women in fisheries and on coastal fisheries and agricultural management. ECA provided advisory services in the formulation of gender-sensitive programmes for the economic empowerment of women and needs assessments. Professional business women were identified for profiling in a publication. With the assistance of ECA, the First Global Women Entrepreneurs Trade Fair and Investment Forum was held in Africa.

48. UNFPA activities to enhance women's economic status were integrated into activities designed to increase their accessibility to reproductive health services, including family planning and sexual health services. For example, in the Philippines one project combined the strengthening of community organization, service delivery and the training of health personnel with income-generating activities for women in urban slums. WFP introduced the practice of assessing beneficiaries and benefits to determine gender gaps in its project benefits.

Public outreach and information dissemination

49. The Department of Public Information radio programmes and segments were distributed globally in 15 languages, and seminars were organized.

VII. Women in power and decision-making

Information collection, database development, research and analysis

50. The Division for the Advancement of Women maintained its database on women in Government at the ministerial and sub-ministerial levels in the executive branch, and convened an expert group meeting on political decision-making and conflict resolution. Cooperation on gender equality issues was initiated by UNESCO with the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Likewise, the National Assembly of Malawi and UNESCO organized a working group to increase women's representation and the consideration of gender issues with parliaments in southern Africa. Twelve Southern African Development Community countries adopted the landmark Mongochi Declaration, as well as a programme of joint action on women's representation and gender issues. ECLAC prepared studies on the access of women to power and their participation in decision-making, and on women and politics.

Operational activities

51. As part of the women's equality and empowerment framework, UNICEF encouraged the participation of women at the community level, making this a condition for programme support at the country level. UNICEF provided training and collaborated with credit and income-generation programmes to introduce social empowerment and leadership skills, resulting in an increase in women's participation in community-based committees and in training. Women are members of the village water committees in country programmes supported by UNICEF, and also assume roles for management of services after training. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs conducted a workshop to train representatives from developing countries in changing attitudes and perceptions and management practices to take women into account in energy planning, and implemented projects to improve basic infrastructure and income generation in villages that included women villagers in decision-making. UNHCR has promoted the participation of women refugees in food management and distribution decisions, and in camp management committees.

52. UNIFEM provided technical assistance and advisory services in training women in the acquisition of political decision-making skills, and provided training to women parliamentarians and non-governmental organizations supporting women leaders in managing campaigns and in acquiring leadership skills. It also supported strategic coalition and alliance-building, and worked to provide forums to increase women's participation in politics. UNV conducted women's leadership training. ESCAP implemented a project on women in urban local governments aimed at promoting participation and representation of women in urban local governments. ESCAP and Habitat organized a workshop on gender-sensitive urban planning and management through collective participation of women in urban local governments.

53. ILO developed a women in management training manual focused on women managers' roles. The impact of women in leadership positions was a focus area of the UNDP regional gender programmes, and UNDP sponsored an international conference on governance for sustainable growth and equity. At the country level, many country cooperative frameworks included programming activities for women in decision-making and leadership positions. Several

UNESCO special projects aimed to empower women and assist them in achieving more important roles in community development. At an ECA-organized gender networking meeting to address the role of women in alleviating poverty, strategies for improving the participation of women in decision-making were discussed, and ECA organized a training seminar on leadership skills development for senior executive women and managers from 11 countries. ECLAC convened an expert meeting on the relationship of women's non-governmental organizations with the State, and prepared a paper on strategies for increasing women's participation in decision-making.

Public outreach and information dissemination

54. The Department of Public Information activities included participation in television broadcasting on women and decision-making and a panel on International Women's Day 1997 on women at the peace table, co-hosted with the Division for the Advancement of Women. The Division issued *Women 2000*, a publication on women's role as decision makers in various sectors. UNICEF, at the national and regional levels through its country programmes, established partnerships with women's non-governmental organizations to promote networking by women activists, and supported the participation of women's non-governmental organizations in development dialogues and policy formulation. UNV assisted in making two television programmes with adolescents on gender roles, and promoted awareness-raising to establish a women's centre on mass-media campaigns.

55. UNFPA focused on raising awareness about the benefits of greater participation of women at the decision-making level in the family, community, political and government spheres. It established alliances with prominent leaders, such as first ladies, who have helped to put gender issues in the limelight. UNFPA provided support to a project on women's legislative advocacy to create a women's lobby for women's health and empowerment. The WFP video *Women Eat Last* was widely broadcast by international and national television networks. At the regional level, media attention was drawn to the impact of projects that strongly reflect WFP commitments to women. ESCWA with UNIFEM and the Jordanian National Committee for Women, organized a workshop to support woman candidates running for parliamentary elections and organizing electoral campaigns.

VIII. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

Information collection and database development

56. The Division for the Advancement of Women compiled a global directory of national machineries for the advancement of women, taking into account related work by the regional commissions. A directory of women's organizations in seven countries was compiled, and women's needs assessment studies were undertaken by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. UNIDO developed a database of various indicators — social, demographic, economic, political and legal — composed of 109 indicators and covering 217 countries and territories. The Population Division gathered gender-specific data on school enrollment, adult literacy and life expectancy at birth, as well as indicators related to reproductive health, in collaboration with other United Nations bodies, and produced data sets on diskette by sex and age on demographic indicators, annual estimates and projections, as well as patterns of fertility. Work to prepare the UNDP *Human Development Report* included disaggregation of social and economic information by sex and other categories, and a framework for developing country databases on gender-sensitive indicators was initiated.

57. The United Nations Statistics Division compiled and disseminated via the Internet country tables from *The World's Women*, which were updated on a yearly basis. It also updated and extended the Women's Indicators and Statistical Database, and made it available in more user-friendly ways.

58. A number of other respondents addressed the question of data and indicators and methodologies for integrating gender into programmes. In some cases, data were only available for urban areas, rural areas/households being left out. There was a lack of data disaggregated by sex, including data on women's health during conflict and post-conflict phases, and on crime, trafficking in women and drug abuse. Some noted a lack of agreement on key definitions, for example on "heads of households", as well as difficulties in conducting field research. UNIDO noted a lack of clarity of strategies on issues related to gender statistics and information provision. There was also insufficient information and data from Governments on the implementation of women's human rights. Others reported a lack of quantified indicators related to customs, traditions and cultural issues. Work on statistics and indicators, while

moving forward, still fell short of requirements for effective gender analysis. A core set of indicators was under development by the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities and by the United Nations Statistics Division and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy. UNFPA developed a framework and indicators to monitor women/gender considerations in programmes and polices that were being field-tested in all regions. FAO provided assistance to member countries for the creation/strengthening of gender units within their ministries of rural development/agriculture to formulate national action plans for rural women.

59. ECA was finalizing an inventory of sources of information on women and gender, and is preparing brochures on the status of women vis-à-vis the critical areas of concern for all African countries. At the country level, UNFPA has provided support to undertake data-collection and analysis activities, including establishing surveys, research, and databases on issues critical to the advancement and empowerment of women. ESCWA compiled and disseminated updated indicators and data on women and the family, and supported the collection by countries of gender-disaggregated data. At the international level, UNFPA provided support to other United Nations partners, including the United Nations Statistics Division. ECLAC published a directory of national organizations dealing with programmes and policies on women in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be updated annually.

Operational activities

60. ESCAP held a regional meeting for participants from national machineries for the advancement of women. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs assisted several ECE member States and Commonwealth of Independent States countries in establishing national machineries for the advancement of women, and assisted the United Arab Emirates Women's Union and Associations through methodological support for the design of a national women's strategy for 2020.

61. UNDP, UNIFEM and United Nations country teams provided funding and technical support for the activities of national-level coalitions of government/non-governmental organizations institutions to follow up the Fourth World Conference on Women. UNIFEM enhanced the capacity of regional organizations, women's ministries and non-governmental organizations to address gender issues and to support gender-responsive development planning, and to develop and disseminate gender-sensitive statistics. ESCWA provided technical assistance to member States in establishing permanent institutional machineries. UNFPA was in the process of developing a framework and indicators to monitor women/gender considerations in programme and policies. UNV provided support to gender and development projects aimed at operationalizing women in development policy and strengthening national machinery. The United Nations Statistics Division trained a number of national officials as well as researchers in statistical methods. ESCAP, with the Swedish International Development Association and UNIFEM, helped to improve statistics on women in the Asia and Pacific region. ECLAC assisted ministries of women's affairs in improving efficiency and effectiveness and implementing the Platform for Action.

62. UNICEF supported setting data systems disaggregated by gender and age and multiple indicator cluster surveys in which gender and age disaggregated data collection was introduced for the first time. Habitat worked with non-governmental organizations to monitor government compliance with gender-related developments arising from the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). ESCWA developed gender-sensitive performance indicators in collaboration with the League of Arab States and the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research. UNIDO trained 20 project staff and government counterparts in addressing gender issues more effectively. FAO sought government support for such measures as the establishment of ministries of women affairs or similar institutions. The Division for the Advancement of Women convened with UNDP and ECE a meeting at Bucharest to follow up the Fourth World Conference on Women that developed proposals on alternative forms of national machineries for women's advancement.

Public outreach and information dissemination

63. ESCAP translated booklets for improving statistics on gender issues into national languages. The Population Division published *World Population Prospects: Sex and Age Distribution of World Populations*, and a wall chart on basic social services for all as one product of the ACC Inter-agency Task Force on Basic Social Services. A wall chart was produced by the ESCWA Statistical Division, in collaboration with the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research, on women and men in Arab countries.

IX. Human rights of women

Information collection, data development, research and analysis

64. The Division for the Advancement of Women, in providing support for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, prepared a review of experiences of treaty bodies in working with women's human rights groups and other non-governmental organizations and an analysis of reservations under various international treaties. The Division convened an expert group meeting on promoting women's enjoyment of their economic and social rights at Turku, Finland, from 1 to 4 December 1997 in preparation for the forty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Division and UNHCR continued to implement a joint work plan for mainstreaming women's human rights in the treaty regime as a whole. UNIFEM provided a briefing paper on the integration of a gender perspective into the work of thematic and country special rapporteurs. UNICEF implemented strategies and innovative approaches on women's human rights and the use of a mainstreaming kit in this area by various organizations, including the Commission on Human Rights. ECLAC published a study on the legal situation of five countries of Latin America, which concludes with the formulation of general recommendations to consolidate respect for the human rights of women in the region. ECA prepared a study on the status of ratification and adherence to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It also discusses the reservations to the Convention made by some States. ECA is finalizing a study on strategies for promoting women's human and legal rights in the family in both urban and rural areas. Habitat carried out research on land and property rights of women. INSTRAW prepared a chapter on monitoring women's rights for a manual produced by the Norwegian Institute for Human Rights.

Operational activities

65. The Division for the Advancement of Women staff made a presentation in a training seminar on reporting to treaty bodies organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In collaboration with the Office and the Division, UNFPA sponsored a round table of human rights treaty bodies on human rights approaches to women's health, with a focus on reproductive and sexual health rights. The Office and the Division coordinated efforts to provide information on treaty bodies on the Internet. Interregionally, UNFPA was providing support to the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy in working with law and policy non-governmental organizations to review and promote national policies and legislation that improve women's access to reproductive health care. At the country level, UNFPA provided assistance to non-governmental organizations in conducting training programmes for women and adolescents in legal literacy and human, political, economic and reproductive rights; developing a network for promotion of equal rights within a framework of human rights; and undertaking programmes for the rehabilitation of sexually exploited children, including educating teachers, community leaders and policy makers about basic human rights. UNFPA was also working with WHO through the Global Commission on Women's Health to improve the health status of women and girls and to develop new policy guidelines and advocacy tools aimed at enforcing the rights of women and girls towards the overall goal of health security.

66. UNICEF organized seminars for parliamentarians and policy makers on the above-mentioned conventions as well as a series of seminars and discussions on strengthening the application of a gender-based rights framework for programming for children and women. UNHCR organized a symposium on gender-based persecution with 16 asylum countries, several of which have since developed guidelines for eligibility and the determination of status for asylum on the grounds of gender-based persecution. UNV provided human rights monitors in the field, more than half of whom are women in the case of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala. WHO and the Division for the Advancement of Women, among others, participated in consultations on medical ethics and women's rights to health, including sexual and reproductive health, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Medical Association. The UNESCO Mediterranean Programme promoted projects and research on the subject of migrant women; women's participation in urban public spheres; the preparation of the Third Forum of Women from the Mediterranean: Women, Science and Technology; the UNESCO Shore to Shore Project; the creation of a women's rights observatory and academic network in collaboration with the Women's Commission of the European Parliament and the National Defence Services for the Rights of Women, and work on the *les transversales* research centre and the creation of a working group on the history of women, which will conduct research. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights undertook a project in partnership with the Division to integrate gender into all technical cooperation projects;

the project intends to facilitate the integration of a gender perspective into all aspects of technical cooperation practices and procedures in the area of human rights, from the needs-assessment and project formulation phases to monitoring and evaluation. The Office trained law enforcement officials on international human rights standards, and has produced a manual on human rights training for the police which contains an extensive chapter on human rights of women. The Office also helped to train African women's rights organizations on human rights of women.

67. ECA, in collaboration with the World Bank, organized a conference on the theme "Gender and law: Eastern Africa speaks". Its aim was to increase knowledge on legal constraints to the advancement of women. ESCAP convened an expert group meeting at which progress on women's rights in the ESCAP region was reviewed and recommendations on women's legal rights were formulated. UNIFEM participated in meetings and funded women's human rights advocates, and aided non-governmental organizations in cross-regional dialogues on emerging issues of women's human rights. In addition, UNIFEM supported training of policy makers and members of the judiciary on women's human rights, and supported leadership development institutes for women's human rights advocates. UNIFEM co-sponsored an orientation workshop on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in New York during a meeting of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for women's human rights advocates from reporting countries.

Public outreach and information dissemination

68. The Division for the Advancement of Women and UNIFEM contributed to a publication of OHCHR on activities to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Division created a Web Site on women's human rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including on efforts to establish an optional protocol under the Convention. UNIFEM produced an advocacy/information kit on mainstreaming the human rights of women in the United Nations system for use by women's human rights advocates and delegates to the Commission on Human Rights. ILO produced a brochure to guide members of the formal enforcement machinery concerning new trends affecting employment equality, such as sexual harassment at the workplace and new approaches in the field of equal pay between men and women. The Department of Public Information issued press releases and fact sheets on women's human rights. Among the principal international human rights instruments, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child all include specific provisions for equality of the sexes. Since their establishment, the committees monitoring those instruments have always emphasized the principle of non-discrimination between men and women, as well as between boys and girls, in the enjoyment of their human rights under the various instruments. The committees have seized every opportunity to raise the awareness of State parties, when considering their reports and making their observations thereupon, of the problem of discrimination against women and the girl child, either legal and institutionalized discrimination or discrimination in practice, and the need for equal protection of the law for men and women. In addition, UNICEF distributed simplified versions of both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women for public awareness campaigns and for use by non-governmental organizations and other service providers. Habitat supported a grass-roots and non-governmental organization campaign for equal rights for women to inherit land/housing and security of tenure.

69. ILO has been implementing a project in nine countries on training and information dissemination on women worker's rights, including information campaigns, workshops, setting up national steering committees and drawing up a national action plan. National training materials have been developed in keeping with the capacity of ILO constituents to implement an affirmative action policy. The ILO intensified its efforts to encourage ratification of ILO Convention No. 100 on equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value, and Convention No. 111 on discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

X. Women and the media

Information collection, database development and research and analysis

70. The Division for the Advancement of Women initiated with INSTRAW and UNIFEM a joint Internet gateway on women and gender, WomenWatch, to provide access to

United Nations system information, and held a workshop of women networkers on women and information technology to launch the initiative in 1996. INSTRAW conducted a survey to determine the extent to which women's organizations use computer-mediated communications. UNESCO supported a project entitled "Women speaking to women: women's rural community radio in least-developed countries". The project seeks to establish at least four fully operational community radio stations designed for women and run by women. The radio stations encourage women to speak out on issues of concern to them and to the societies in which they live. UNESCO also supported a workshop for radio producers to produce gender-sensitive radio and post-literacy materials, covering such areas as child marriage, entrepreneurship, reducing women's workload, advocacy for women's education, rural sanitation and women's skills in gardening and marketing.

Operational activities, public outreach and information dissemination

71. The Division for the Advancement of Women published *Women 2000*, No.1 (1996), on the theme "Women and the information revolution". ESCAP facilitated information exchange through computer networking to strengthen a women's information network. UNIFEM compiled a directory of media women practitioners, created a media watch in one African country, and conducted training of mainstream media and journalists in gender analysis. Many UNIFEM projects and activities have media outreach components, including the food technology contest in the Andean region, and human rights training. INSTRAW initiated the preparation of a manual to promote the use of computer mediated communications among women's organizations. FAO formulated a project on an inventory of non-governmental organizations dealing with rural women in Africa, the Near East and Europe. UNFPA worked with national media to favourably influence policy (for example, in Nigeria a television drama series on family health and welfare issues was broadcasted nationwide), and has sponsored a variety of campaigns, such as the production of a radio and television drama series on gender, family health/welfare and population issues; it has also provided support for local drama groups which present works that promote wider acceptance and use of reproductive health services. UNFPA also supported various women-led alternative media organizations. UNHCR trained local women's non-governmental organizations and refugee and displaced women to produce radio programmes on peace and reconciliation, refugee-related information, and health and nutrition.

72. UNICEF incorporated this issue in a number of its projects aimed at the girl child, violence against women, maternal mortality and better parenting. UNICEF undertook a number of public awareness programmes, leading to better coverage and a more sensitive portrayal of gender issues. The Department of Public Information held workshops for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries on a variety of topics, including gender equality. The Department's information centres organized television programmes and workshops, and gave talks on such issues as empowerment of women through the media. Habitat and UNESCO sponsored a workshop for women in the media just before Habitat II giving them the technical skills necessary to disseminate information on the Conference. UNESCO reinforced the network, giving special attention to the presence of women on the information highways through the communication and culture project on women in cyberspace (cyberworld), and the use of community radio by and for women, especially in countries with high illiteracy rates among women. The Toronto and Beijing recommendations for Action continued to provide a framework for empowering women in and through the media. UNESCO will continue to strengthen and support networking among women communicators and women non-governmental organizations, particularly at the grass-roots level, and their involvement in communication and information policy-making. UNESCO and the Radio Netherlands Training Centre organized a workshop on specific management applied to communication for Central American Women journalists. UNESCO provided support to the development of independent and socially responsible media, with a particular focus on raising gender awareness and the promotion of women's equal participation in the political, social and economic life of society.

73. ECLAC was developing a communications strategy that would be supported by three mainstays: (a) the electronic network as instrumental in strengthening the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in the work of the institution; (b) the establishment of an Internet home page to be regularly updated on the activities of its Women and Development Unit and the impact in the region of its activities; and (c) radio programmes that would be designed both to confront gender stereotypes and disseminate information to groups in civil society. It was hoped that that strategy would be a powerful instrument for the follow-up of the Regional Programme of Action. ESCWA organized a workshop for the media to raise awareness on gender issues and priorities.

XI. Women and the environment

Information collection, database development, research and analysis

74. UNIFEM completed research on the impact of environmental degradation on women's livelihoods, and land rights and policies in developing countries. The Division for the Advancement of Women, with UNFPA and INSTRAW, held an expert group meeting on women, population and environment to support the work programme of the Commission on the Status of Women. ECLAC published a study on gender, environment and sustainability, which includes the proposal of a new methodology to design research proposals and public policies on this issue. INSTRAW created a training package on women, environmental management and sustainable development.

Operational activities

75. UNIDO developed a training kit for gender integration in environment activities. IFAD addressed the issue of women and the environment in most of its projects. UNIFEM had a number of activities in the area of women and the environment, including increasing the capacity of rural women to act as agents of change on environmental issues, and an effort to increase awareness of women's environmental concerns in Global Environment Fund and Capacity 21 programmes. It also trained women in the area of energy planning for sustainable development through a project undertaken by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the African Development Bank. At the national and international levels, UNFPA supports various projects that link women's economic empowerment, environment and reproductive health. UNHCR supported the integration of refugee women in environmental conservation and management, including tree nurseries and reforestation in asylum countries. UNIDO developed a project for women working in the informal gold mining sector, many of whom are rural women with limited access to information, on possible environmental health dangers associated with their work. Training and advisory services were provided as part of the project. Through the eco-volunteer programme supported by UNDP and UNV, village women's groups were able to improve water management practices of pastoralist communities in East Africa. The ILO created alternative income-generating activities for women fuelwood carriers. It helped integrate in forest management policies and programmes the needs of women fuelwood carriers and the demand for fuelwood. It provided a model for the development of a large-scale credit scheme to support small enterprises and micro-enterprises undertaken by women fuelwood carriers.

76. FAO had a project on local knowledge information systems to collect data on women's contribution to biodiversity and bring them to the attention of decision makers. UNDP/the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought, in collaboration with the Government of Norway, sponsored a workshop on strengthening the role of women in the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa. Habitat and UNEP organized a parallel event on land/housing rights for women at Habitat II.

77. A UNESCO project entitled "Solar villages in Africa" aimed to demonstrate and enhance the use by rural communities of low-cost eco-technologies for power generation and local production of construction materials; and to involve an increasing number of women in using eco-technologies to meet their domestic needs. UNESCO also had a project entitled "Women and water resource supply and use" to improve the quality of women's life by facilitating their access to water resources. ECLAC presented papers on gender in seminars on the issues of development and environment in urban settings, and on population and sustainable development.

Public outreach and information dissemination

78. UNEP honoured 25 contemporary women from around the world who had made valuable contributions towards the goal of protection of the planet. The Department of Public Information produced and distributed a feature article on women and sustainable development, and organized United Nations radio programmes on women and environment. In collaboration with UNIFEM, UNFPA sponsored participants to an international conference on governance for sustainable growth and equity organized by UNDP. UNIFEM provided information on environmentally sound technologies to grass-roots organizations working on women and the environment.

XII. The girl child

Information collection, database development and research and analysis

79. For the mid-decade review of goals of the World Summit for Children, UNICEF supported the collection and analysis of data on achievement of goals in health and education, disaggregated by sex and age. In many countries, the multiple indicator cluster surveys provided benchmarks for the first time for monitoring child survival and well-being. In several countries, pre-Fourth World Conference on Women awareness activities were supported with research studies. The Population Division maintained and updated databases on child mortality by sex in developing regions, and examined the problem of gender differences in infant and child mortality in a published working paper. INSTRAW developed a methodology to measure the unpaid work of women and men. The Division for the Advancement of Women organized an expert group meeting, in collaboration with UNFPA, UNICEF and ECA, on adolescent girls and their rights, in preparation for the forty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

80. UNICEF declared 1997 the Year of the Girl Child, and stimulated actions for follow-up on recommendations emerging from one of several comprehensive studies on the girl child. UNESCO produced and coproduced with its partners (Governments, other United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations) numerous manuals and gender-balanced teaching materials, and provided guidance and counselling services for local educators, while helping them to develop different formal and non-formal education programmes. In cooperation with UNESCO field offices in Africa, national surveys concerning the participation of girls and women in scientific, technical and vocation education were completed.

81. The Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, in recent reports, identified three catalysts that prevent but also contribute to the problem of commercial sexual exploitation of children: the criminal justice system, education and the media.

Operational activities

82. UNICEF participated in discussions with representatives of United Nations missions, and provided advice regarding the various resolutions on the rights of the child. It undertook programmes on legal reforms, training of law enforcement personnel and the implementation of rehabilitation programmes, and supported a three-day seminar for senior government officials, scholars and non-governmental organizations to review and discuss problems facing girls. UNICEF, in collaboration with the organization End Child Prostitution and Trafficking of Children and the non-governmental organization Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, planned to form a technical advisory group at the global level to facilitate information exchange, make available specific expertise, and encourage project collaboration and support established monitoring mechanisms. UNICEF has a number of projects within its country programmes focused on the rights of the girl child.

83. The ILO addressed the issue of girls in the workplace through a number of programmes carried out under the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour. At the national level, the ILO supported action programmes for the girl worker in a number of countries. UNFPA demonstrated its commitment to promoting the well-being of children, especially girl children, by addressing the reproductive health-care needs of adolescents in its programmes. Examples include assistance to Governments and non-governmental organizations in incorporating adolescent reproductive health information, education and communication activities, as well as counselling and services into national programmes, and the establishment of multi-purpose centres for youth, which, *inter alia*, provide reproductive health counselling, outreach activities, referral and other services. UNFPA programmes increasingly addressed the issue of the sexual abuse of girls, incorporating training, sensitization and referral systems within the education and health systems to adequately care for girls who had experienced violence. In countries with high female illiteracy and low proportions of girls in primary schools, UNFPA programmes promoted the education of girls in the development of population policies and advocacy campaigns. A UNESCO project on scientific technical and vocational education for girls was launched to enhance access to science, technical and vocational education, to achieve a gender-balanced environment and to sensitize policy-makers to those issues.

Public outreach and information dissemination

84. Department of Public Information activities on the girl child included radio programmes, workshops and seminars on specific topics, ranging from the sexual exploitation of

children to the problems of adolescents. UNICEF and UNFPA provided public awareness and multidisciplinary services addressing adolescent needs, as well as the needs of very young and pre-adolescent girls. ECA produced and disseminated a study entitled "Traditional and cultural practices harmful to the girl child", which addresses various practices that prevent the girl child from realizing her full potential, the prevalence of such practices and strategies for eliminating them.

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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men

Older women and support systems: new challenges

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. United Nations conferences and forums have been concerned about the situation of older women for more than three decades. The first conference to deal with the issue was the World Conference of the International Women's Year, held in 1975 in Mexico City. The Conference recommended that special studies be carried out on the situation of aged or handicapped women.[1] In 1980, the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held in Copenhagen, also had the issue on its agenda. It recommended that special attention be paid to the problems elderly women face in their societies.[2] In 1982, the World Assembly on Ageing, which adopted the International Plan of Action on Ageing, recognized that the majority of older persons are women and recommended that particular attention be paid to their situation.[3]

2. In 1986, the Commission on the Status of Women considered a report of the Secretary-General on the status and situation of older women in their societies (E/CN.6/1986/10). The World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held in 1985 in Nairobi, Kenya, also addressed the issue of older women. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women highlight some issues that are of particular concern to older women, such as women's longer life expectancy, their economic situation and special health needs.[4]

3. In 1992, the Commission on the Status of Women adopted resolution 36/4, on the integration of elderly women into development.[5] In it, the Commission stresses that approaches for the advancement of women should take into account all stages of life and that older women make important contributions to development.

4. The Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in 1995, also reflects concern about the situation of older women. The recommendations made by the Conference are based on a life cycle approach and refer explicitly to "women at all stages of life".[6] Governments recognized that the socially established roles of women and men were different and that, therefore, women and men had different needs and interests. Policies that did not take that into account tended to discriminate against women. At the Conference, Governments committed themselves to basing their policies and programmes on a thorough analysis of the gender-specific needs of women and men, in order to make sure that both genders benefit equally.

5. The present report was prepared in response to Commission resolution 41/2, on older women, human rights and development.[7] In it, the Commission decided that at its forty-second session, under the agenda item "Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men", it would consider the status of older women and make substantive recommendations thereon. Furthermore, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to report on "the key global issues regarding the differential impact of population ageing on men and women as a contribution to the International Year of Older Persons" and to submit the report to the Commission at its forty-third session. The objective of the present report is to provide a substantive basis on which the Commission can discuss the status of older women and make relevant recommendations. The discussion of the Commission on this item will also contribute to the ongoing preparations for the International Year of Older Persons, to be held in 1999.

6. The report focuses on support systems for older persons, which include both financial support for older persons who do not earn a regular income and psycho-social support and assistance with daily living for dependent older persons. The report gives an overview of the new challenges those support systems face and changing caregiving patterns. It also highlights the situation of older women and suggests gender-sensitive policies and programmes to address the situation. So far, very little research has been done on how changing caregiving patterns affect women and men differently. In the assessment of the situation of older persons, gender analysis has yet to be applied. In order to explore this new ground, the Division for the Advancement of Women, jointly with the Division on Social Policy and Development of the United Nations Secretariat, organized the Expert Group Meeting on Caregiving and Older Persons: Gender Dimensions, in Malta, from 30 November to 2 December 1997. Particularly relevant recommendations of the Meeting are included in the report.

II. Care and support for older persons: gender dimensions

7. The ageing of the world's population is one of the most significant developments in the twentieth century, and it will become even more significant in the century to come. In 1990, almost half a billion people were 60 years old and

above. By 2030, the number will triple, to 1.4 million. Most of this growth will take place in developing countries, over half of it in Asia, and more than a quarter in China alone.[8] In most countries, older women are much more numerous than men.

8. The majority of older persons are healthy and active. They need opportunities to be productive and to lead a self-fulfilling life. However, within the population of 60-plus, persons aged 75 (the "very old") and over are the fastest growing group. The gender difference in life expectancy rises with age; almost two thirds of the very old are women. Though many of them are independent, at that age, care and support with daily living become more important.

9. Most societies in the developing regions rely exclusively on the extended family — which usually means women — to take care of the dependent elderly. Societies in the developed regions, however, often have formal pensions and care systems. The ageing of the population and the declining availability of family carepersons have put high demand upon care systems for older people. The challenges those system face differ in countries with informal and formal support systems but also show some commonalities.

A. Countries with informal support systems

10. In most parts of the world, dependent older persons are supported by their extended families. By 2030, more than 75 per cent of the world's older population will live in areas that are today called "developing countries". Traditional support systems for older people face severe challenges. The population in developing countries ages much faster than that in industrialized countries. In France, it took 140 years for the proportion of older persons to double, from 9 to 18 per cent. It took 86 years in Sweden and 45 years in the United Kingdom. In China, it will take only 34 years and in Venezuela, only 22 years. The rising share of the older population is caused by declining fertility rates, combined with increased life expectancy. Fertility rates have declined more recently and more rapidly in developing countries than they did in the industrialized regions. In some non-Western countries, the fertility rate is now at or below replacement level — for example, in China, Thailand, the Republic of Korea, and many Caribbean countries.[9] The consequence of this older age structure is that there are fewer young people who can provide support to their dependent elder family members.

11. In addition, the decline of traditional value systems has increased the stress that is put on traditional support systems for older persons. Traditional societies often have great respect for elderly people, who are considered the guardians of wisdom and who have control over certain resources. This has enabled them to protect their welfare and autonomy. Now, however, many developing countries are in the process of modernization and industrialization. This often erodes the status older women and men used to have in traditional societies. Modern societies tend to value economic success over traditional values. The traditional and sacred are often perceived as inappropriate to modern societies. This cuts to the very heart of the traditional resources of older persons. In agrarian economies the elderly are an economic asset, but a modern industrialized society associates great age with diminished economic function. As a result, many older persons have lost their value as a sacred resource and may be perceived as a burden to society and their family.[10]

12. Urbanization is another trend which has weakened the traditional support systems for older persons. The global population living in urban areas more than doubled between 1950 and 1975 and increased another 55 per cent from 1975 to 1990. By the early 1990s, 45 per cent of the world's population lived in urban areas. In developing countries, the urban population is growing by 4 per cent a year, much faster than in industrialized countries (1 per cent).[11] It is mostly young people who leave their villages to work in the cities. There, they work in the formal sector and often do not have any way of taking care of their parents. This pattern is accelerated as women, who are the primary caretakers, enter the labour market in increasing numbers. Furthermore, housing in urban centres often does not accommodate extended families. Therefore, older people, most of them women, are often left behind in rural areas, without support.

13. The decline of traditional support systems affects women and men differently. However, so far, the gender dimension has received very little attention by researchers and practitioners. Policy makers in developing countries are just beginning to address the challenges traditional support systems face.

B. Countries with formal support systems

14. One third of the dependent older persons in the world rely on support outside their extended family. Most of them live in the developed regions. Here, the proportion of the old population is currently the highest in the world whereas in high-income countries today more than 17 per cent of the

population are over 60, in low-income countries fewer than 7 per cent are over 60.[12]

15. In high-income countries (except Japan), fewer than 20 per cent of older parents live with their children (compared to 75 per cent in the low-income countries of Asia and Africa). The majority of older people in those countries lives with just one other person, usually the spouse (52 per cent) or by themselves (29 per cent).[13] Women are much more likely than men to live alone.

16. Although psycho-social support from the family remains important in developed countries, most elderly rely on formal systems for their pension and health care. The share of the elderly population residing in institutions ranges from 4 per cent in Israel and Japan to 11 per cent in the Netherlands.[14] Most of the formal caregiving is provided by female professionals who are often under-paid. Furthermore, those who are provided with formal care are also mainly women. In Canada, Israel and the United States, for example, three fourths of the elderly living in nursing-homes are women.[15]

17. In terms of their financial security, the elderly in developed countries rely almost exclusively on public pensions. Today, mandatory pension plans cover more than 90 per cent of the labour force in industrialized countries. Governments are responsible for financing and managing public pensions. The most common arrangement in those countries is called the "pay-as-you-go" system, since currently working adults contribute to the programmes with their payroll taxes to finance the pensions of those who have already retired from the labour force. Since the system is based on continuous employment in the formal sector, women tend to be disadvantaged.

18. Due to the ageing of the population, the "pay-as-you-go" systems are under scrutiny. The ratio of working age population to retired population is changing. Therefore, spending for public pensions will increase dramatically. In those countries members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the expenditure on public pensions grew twice as fast as the gross national product (GDP) between 1960 and 1990; it now represents nearly one tenth of GDP in those countries.[16] Over the next 50 years, public spending on pensions will escalate in all regions (assuming that the current relationship between demography and spending continues).

19. As a result of such changes, Governments, pensioners and the current working population in developing countries have come to question the future of public pensions. Many countries have started to develop private pension plans to complement the public support systems. In line with these overall trends, there is often an attempt to bring care back to the family and community. Many initiatives stress informal caregiving as the main pillar of support in old age.

20. The trend to shift responsibilities from public support systems back to the family has increased the demand put on informal caregivers. All over the world, it is mainly women who give care to older dependent family members. Most societies take it for granted that women will provide unpaid caregiving labour. This deprives women from other choices and may limit their opportunities for self-development. Women are often caught in the middle of the needs of their children and their ageing parents. Furthermore, since women are increasingly entering the labour market, they have to cope with the double or triple burdens of caregiving, household work, the needs of their families and the workplace.

III. The situation of older women

21. The feminization of old age is a global phenomenon. In most countries, women live longer than men. For example, life expectancy at age 15 is eight years longer for women than for men in the United States, seven years longer in Canada, and six years longer in Belgium, Sweden and Germany. In most developing countries also, women live longer than men, though generally less so than in industrialized countries. For example, at age 15 the advantage is five years in Mauritius and four years in Venezuela.[17] The gender difference rises among people over age 75; almost two thirds of the "very old" are women.

A. Living arrangements

22. Since women live longer than men, they are more likely than men to live alone in old age. In almost every country, widows outnumber widowers. In Africa and Asia, more than 50 per cent of the women over age 65 are widows, compared with only 10-20 per cent of the men. In the United States, 30 per cent of the persons over age 65 live alone, and 80 per cent of them are women.[18] In Switzerland, four times as many elderly women live alone as elderly men (40 per cent versus 10 per cent); in Germany, six times as many (37 per cent versus 6 per cent).[19] This is the typical situation in most developed countries.

23. In countries with traditional support systems, the number of women living alone is much lower than in developed countries, but still higher among women than among men. Most older persons in developing countries,

whether widowed or not, live with their children. The more offspring a woman has, the more likely she will live with one of them. However, declining fertility rates will reduce the availability of close kin in old age. In Jamaica, a women had an average of six children in 1960. By 1990, the number had declined to 2.8, and in the year 2000, the average is projected to be just 2 children.[20] This development, in conjunction with a breakdown in traditional family patterns, will leave future generations of women living alone without a formal system to support them when they become dependent.

B. Economic situation

24. Older women are more likely to be poor than men. During their lives, women generally have fewer possibilities to earn and save money than men. Their labour is mostly unpaid. If they do work in the paid labour force, they are concentrated in the less well-paid professions and part-time jobs. Furthermore, due to their different employment history, women have less access to formal pensions. Their participation in the paid labour force is shorter, more irregular and more likely to be in the informal sector. Social security was created for the benefit of wage earners and most often does not recognize the value of household work and child-rearing. The Beijing Platform for Action states that, where social security systems are based on the principle of continuous employment, the risk of falling into poverty is greater for women than for men, particularly in old age.[21]

25. Furthermore, cultural practices and legal systems discriminate against women in many countries. Often, women have less access to property and inheritance and a lower social status than men. Some cultures, for example, pass property from the husband to the eldest son.

26. As a result, all over the world, older women are more likely to be poor than men. In the United States, one third of single women over 65 lived in poverty in 1986, twice the rate for the rest of the population.[22] A study of seven developed countries revealed that an elderly person living alone had less income than an elderly couple (adjusted to differences in household size). That is especially true when the single person is an elderly woman.[23]

27. In developing countries, where public assistance is scarce, women are even more likely to face poverty when they are old. In urban China, 41 per cent of older women have annual incomes below the extreme poverty line (which is 70 per cent of the normal poverty line), compared to just 4 per cent of older men. In Venezuela, two thirds of the old people in the lowest income decile are women.[24] Generally, widows are the most vulnerable. In India, for example, households headed by widows are by far the poorest group. Their spending is 70 per cent below the national income.[25]

C. Health

28. Older women face a higher risk of chronic illness and disability. Female advantage in life expectancy is often offset by disability. The concept of healthy life expectancy is used to refer to the average number of years that a person expects to be free of functional limitations. It is difficult to compare measures of healthy life expectancy among countries. However, one commonality that has emerged from various studies is that women who reach age 65 can expect to spend a greater proportion of their remaining years with functional disabilities than their male counterparts. Data collected in developing countries show that these gender patterns are universal.[26]

29. The overall disadvantage women face is not caused solely by the fact that they live longer than men. Older women's health problems are rooted in the discrimination they face in their earlier lives. During their younger years, many women have less access to nutrition and health care than men, which leads to chronic illness in old age (e.g., osteoporosis or anaemia).

D. Contribution to development

30. Older women support their families and communities in many ways. In many societies, older women who live with their families perform crucial tasks in the household, such as buying food, cooking and cleaning house. Older women often take care of their grandchildren and thus ensure that their daughters can earn an income for the family. Furthermore, in many communities older women provide counselling for young people, arrange marriages, act as kin-keepers, attend births and deaths, lead religious rituals and do a wide range of volunteer work. Many older women earn incomes with trading and craft work.

31. However, older women's contributions to the well-being of their families and communities are widely overlooked. Societies often regard older women as an economic burden, without recognizing their potential. Furthermore, gender-stereotyping confines older women to their roles within the house and the family and restricts them from decision-making in the public sphere. Unlike men, women rarely advance in their professional careers in old

age. Older women, in general, have limited choices in terms of careers.

IV. Recommendations

32. Based on the preliminary analysis of the situation, the following recommendations might be considered.

A. Research

33. So far, there is a lack of expertise and research on support systems for older persons from a gender perspective. National and international statistical and research institutes should:

(a) Disaggregate all data by age and sex;

(b) Analyse the needs of older persons and caregivers from a gender perspective;

(c) Pay special attention to the situation of older women and men in developing countries and carry out research on how the decline in traditional support systems affects women and men differently;

(d) Analyse the consequences of privatizing public pensions and health care based on gender and age;

(e) Develop a methodology to measure the value of women's unpaid labour.

B. Economic security

34. Women in all parts of the world are more likely to be poor than men. Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions should:

(a) Ensure that women at all stages of life have access to employment and income equal to that of men;

(b) Value the important contribution older women make to development;

(c) Channel resources towards older women in order to eliminate the gender gap in income;

(d) Eliminate discrimination against women in public pension funds that are based on the principle of continuous employment in the formal sector and extend coverage, whenever possible, to the informal and agricultural sector;

(e) Ensure that the trend to shift responsibility away from public pensions to individual savings takes into account the differing needs and interests of women and men;

(f) Ensure that older women have access to credit and income-earning possibilities;

(g) Equally involve men and women at all levels when designing and implementing economic policies that affect older persons.

C. Education and empowerment

35. The level of formal education and participation in public life of older women is much lower than that of men. Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions should:

(a) Ensure that throughout their lives, girls and women have equal access to education and vocational training, and promote women's self-esteem at all stages of life;

(b) Promote lifelong learning on the part of women, provide possibilities for training and re-training, equip older women with knowledge of modern and traditional technologies so they remain in the mainstream of society;

(c) Ensure older women's autonomy and productivity;

(d) Promote a positive image of older women in political and economic decision-making through mass media and education;

(e) Give special attention to the situation of older women in the context of the International Year of Older Persons (1999).

D. Well-being of caregivers

36. Women as caregivers are in demand. In order to support caregivers, Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions should:

(a) Attach higher value to unpaid caregiving labour and be aware that caregiving is not in unlimited supply;

(b) Ensure that the demand put upon women as caregivers does not increase disproportionately to that put upon men;

(c) Provide caregivers with occasional respites from their duties and with various services, such as house-keeping help, self-help groups, specialized counselling and training;

(d) Promote an equal sharing of caregiving responsibilities between men and women;

(e) Consider providing financial assistance to informal caregivers;

(f) Support women who combine paid work and elder care with measures such as flexible working arrangements, family leave for the care of older dependent family members, and reintegration of carers after a career break;

(g) Offer a variety of alternative services to older people, such as home care and day care centres.

Notes

[1] *Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year, Mexico City, 19 June-2 July 1975* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.IV.1), chap. III, resolution 13. Social security and family security for women, including the elderly and the handicapped.

[2] *Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace*, Copenhagen, 14-30 July 1980 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.80.IV.3).

[3] *Report of the World Assembly on Aging, Vienna, 26 July to 6 August 1982* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.I.16).

[4] *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

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Commission on the Status of Women
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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern

Thematic issues before the Commission on the Status of Women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1996/6, requested the Secretary-General to submit an analytical report to the Commission on the Status of Women on the thematic issues to be addressed at each session. Four critical areas of concern from the Beijing Platform for Action were selected for consideration at the forty-second session of the Commission: "Violence against women" (chap. IV.D), "Women and armed conflict" (chap. IV.E), "Human rights of women" (chap. IV.I) and "The girl child" (chap. IV.L).

The present report takes into consideration the intergovernmental mandates contained in Commission on the Status of Women resolution 41/4 and General Assembly resolution 52/97 on violence against women migrant workers; Commission resolution 41/5 and Assembly resolution 52/98 on traffic in women and girls; and Assembly resolution 52/99 on traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls.

The present report addresses strategies for accelerating the implementation of the Platform for Action in the four critical areas of concern mentioned above, drawing, *inter alia*, on recommendations from expert group meetings organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat in preparation for the Commission's consideration of agenda item 3 (c).

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 1996/6 of 22 July 1996, the Economic and Social Council called for analytical reports to be submitted annually to the Commission on the Status of Women on the thematic issues to be addressed in connection with the implementation of selected critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action. The four critical areas selected for review at the forty-second session are: "Violence against women", "Women and armed conflict", "Human rights of women" and "The girl child". It was recommended that reports include recommendations and conclusions; identify the responsible actors; and be based on available data and information, as far as possible.

2. During 1997, the Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, convened expert group meetings on three of the critical areas of concern to be taken up by the Commission on the Status of Women at its current session. The expert group meetings focused on issues that either had not previously received the attention of the Commission or in the view of the Secretariat required further exploration in light of the Platform for Action. In the critical area of concern, "Women and armed conflict", the focus of the expert group meeting was on gender persecution, as a follow-up to an earlier expert group meeting on women in power and decision-making that addressed women's participation in conflict resolution. In the critical area "Human rights of women", the focus was on women's economic and social rights, in particular the impact of gender on the conceptualization and full realization of those rights. The meeting highlighted the interdependencies among various critical areas of concern of the Platform, and the role of a rights-based approach to the implementation of the entire Platform and thus the achievement of gender equality. In the expert group meeting on "The girl child", the focus was on the rights of adolescent girls, in particular adolescent girls in need of special protection; the health of adolescent girls, including reproductive and sexual health and nutrition; and creating an enabling environment for the realization of human rights and empowerment of adolescent girls. The Division also commissioned five regional studies on violence against women, focusing on the impact of measures being taken to address domestic violence. The preliminary results of those studies have been drawn upon in preparing the present report; they will be published later in 1998.

3. The aim of the present report is to identify policy measures that may be taken to accelerate the achievement of equality between men and women, eliminate discrimination against women and empower women in the context of the Platform for Action. The recommendations of the expert group meetings and the preliminary results of the studies commissioned are set out in the present report. The reports of the expert group meetings are before the Commission as background documents in one official United Nations language only.

4. The Commission's attention is drawn in particular to sections II.B., III.B, IV. B and V.B. of the present report, which contain strategies for accelerating the implementation of the four critical areas of concern as a basis for formulating agreed conclusions.

II. Violence against women

5. The Platform for Action identifies violence against women as one of the priority concerns of the international community that calls for urgent response. The critical area "Violence against women" (chap. IV.D) categorizes such violence as an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace (para. 112). This critical area is linked with the critical area "Human rights of women" (chap. IV.I). Both critical areas classify violence against women as conduct that both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms (paras. 112 and 224). The Platform points out that in all societies, to a greater or lesser degree, women and girls are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse that cuts across lines of income, class and culture (para. 112).

6. Consistent with the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women contained in General Assembly resolution 48/104, the Platform for Action defines "violence against women" to mean any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Such violence encompasses but is not limited to (see Platform for Action, para. 113, and Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, article 2):

(a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;

(b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape,

sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;

(c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated by the State, wherever it occurs.

7. Particular forms of violence against women are also specified in the Platform for Action (paras. 114 and 115), including violations of the rights of women in situations of armed conflict, in particular murder, systematic rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy; forced sterilization; coercive/forced use of contraceptives; female infanticide; and prenatal sex selection.

8. The Platform for Action points out that women in all countries, irrespective of culture, class and income, are at risk of all or some of the above-mentioned forms of violence. Some groups of women, however, are especially vulnerable, such as women belonging to minority groups, indigenous women, refugee women, women migrants, including women migrant workers, women in poverty living in rural or remote communities, destitute women, women in institutions or in detention, female children, women with disabilities, elderly women, displaced women, repatriated women, women living in poverty, and women in situations of armed conflict, foreign occupation, wars of aggression, civil wars and terrorism, including hostage taking (para. 116).

9. Knowledge about the causes and consequences as well the incidence of violence against women have greatly developed in the 20 years it has been on the international agenda.[1] Resolutions relating to various forms of violence to which women are subjected in diverse settings have been adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. Particular manifestations of violence against women, including trafficking in women and traditional practices affecting the health of women and children, such as female genital mutilation, have been the focus of the Subcommission on Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. Reports of the Secretary-General on the differing aspects of violence against women and the vulnerabilities of particular groups of women in that regard, including migrant women workers, have been submitted to the General Assembly and various United Nations bodies. The problem has also been addressed by the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), as well as United Nations treaty bodies, in particular the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (see E/CN.6/1995/3/Add.3, paras. 12-21).

10. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women was the culmination of United Nations efforts since the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies[2] to address violence against women. The Declaration locates violence against women within the framework of violation of human rights obligations, categorizing it as an issue of inequality and discrimination against women, and sets out strategies that United Nations Member States and agencies should employ to eliminate its occurrence. States are urged to consider the development of national plans of action to promote the protection of women against any form of violence, and, if appropriate, to cooperate with non-governmental organizations in that regard; adopt appropriate legal provisions; introduce training for relevant sectors; address issues of education and the portrayal of images of women; promote research and the collection of data and statistics relating to gender-based violence; and adopt special measures for women who are especially vulnerable to violence. Organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations are requested to promote awareness of violence against women, and the coordination of efforts within the United Nations is encouraged (see E/1996/16).

11. The categorization by the Declaration of gender-based violence against women as a violation of their human rights and as a dimension of discrimination between women and men encouraged the Commission on Human Rights to condemn all acts of gender-based violence and to appoint a Special Rapporteur on violence against women (see Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1994/45 and 1997/44). Since her appointment, the Special Rapporteur has reported on and made recommendations relating to violence against women within the family, including domestic violence, incest, and violence related to traditions and customs, such as female genital mutilation, dowry violence and widowhood rites and in the community, including rape, trafficking in women and violence against migrant women workers (see E/CN.4/1994/42; E/CN.4/1996/53 and Adds.1 and 2; and E/CN.4/1997/47 and Adds. 1, 2, 3 and 4).

12. The recommendations adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women with respect to violence against women built on previous efforts to address the issue both within and outside the United Nations.[3] They call for Government condemnation of violence against women and due diligence in the prevention, investigation and punishment of acts of violence against women;

implementation of existing international standards with respect to violence against women and the support of international mechanisms in that regard; adoption or effective implementation of legal measures to confront all forms of gender-based violence against women; the introduction or strengthening of awareness-raising of the various forms of violence against women, their causes and consequences, in all sectors, including through an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes related to violence against women, research and training and education for specific groups; and provision of services for those affected by violence. Specific recommendations are also addressed to the elimination of trafficking in women and the assistance of victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking, particularly young women and children.

13. The recommendations of the Platform for Action constitute a comprehensive policy blueprint for the elimination of violence against women, and efforts prior to and following its adoption have gone some way towards translating those policies into action. The Secretary-General's second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (see E/CN.6/1995/3/Add.4) described strategies to confront gender-based violence against women that were introduced at the international and national levels prior to the Fourth World Conference on Women (see E/CN.6/1995/3, paras. 23-73). Strategies are also described in the reports of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, while measures introduced at the national level pursuant to the Platform for Action are outlined in the national action plans submitted by Governments to the Secretariat (see E/CN.6/1998/6) in compliance with General Assembly resolution 50/203 of 22 December 1995.

A. Recent developments and trends

1. International level

14. Since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, international activity relating to violence has included the further development of legal measures and strategies to address gender-based violence against women; the identification of specific settings in which women are especially vulnerable to the risk of gender-based violence; and a continued emphasis on mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all policies and programmes of the United Nations of relevance in this regard (see agreed conclusions 1997/1 of the Economic and Social Council). The mainstreaming directive has sought to ensure that relevant policies, programme formulation and delivery, for example in the context of human rights, refugee protection, humanitarian relief and health, hitherto developed with little attention to their differential impact on women and men, take account of those differentials to promote the interests of women on a basis of equality with men.

15. The Commission on the Status of Women is currently formulating an optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women that will allow women the right to seek redress for violations of their human rights, including with regard to gender-based violence. The preparatory committees for the statute of the permanent International Criminal Court have taken account of existing provisions relating to the Ad Hoc Criminal Tribunals for former Yugoslavia and Rwanda that address gender-based violence against women in times of armed conflict. The draft statute for the Court, which will be considered at an international conference of plenipotentiaries in June 1998, will almost certainly incorporate specific reference to gender-based international crimes.

16. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/86 of 12 December 1997, adopted the Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which have been put forward as a model of guidelines to be used by Governments in their efforts, within the criminal justice system, to address the various manifestations of violence against women. The Model Strategies, which build on the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Platform, aim to provide *de jure* and de facto equality between women and men, and equal access for women to justice. They outline detailed proposals with respect to criminal law and procedure; police practice; sentencing and corrections; victim support and assistance; health and social services; training for police, criminal justice officials, practitioners and professionals involved in the criminal justice system; research and evaluation; measures of prevention; and international cooperation. Specific recommendations are also made with regard to activities to follow up the Model Strategies.

17. Monitoring of the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Elimination of Harmful Traditional Practices affecting the Health of Women and Children (see E/CN.4/Sub.2/1994/10/Add.1 and Corr.1), adopted by the Subcommission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, which recommends strategies to eliminate practices, including female genital mutilation, has continued within the Subcommission (see E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996/6; E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/10 and Add.1).

The General Assembly addressed the issue of traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and children in its resolution 52/99 of 12 December 1995, and a report on the implementation of that resolution will be before the Assembly at its fifty-third session, in 1998. UNFPA, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF issued a joint statement on female genital mutilation in April 1997, offering collaborative support for Government and community efforts in that regard. As part of an international advocacy campaign, UNFPA appointed a Special Ambassador for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation in September 1997.

18. The vulnerability of women migrant workers to violence has emerged as a concern of the international community, as has trafficking in women and violence associated with prostitution, including in the context of sex tourism. The Commission on the Status of Women and the General Assembly have considered reports of the Secretary-General on the above issues (A/50/378, A/51/325 and A/52/356), and have adopted resolutions that suggest strategies relevant to those forums. In its resolutions 52/97 and 52/98 of 12 December 1997, the General Assembly invited the Commission to address violence against women migrant workers and traffic in women and girls at its forty-second session under the thematic issues "Violence against women" and/or "Human rights of women".

19. The Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women, administered by UNIFEM, became operational during 1997. A number of projects, predominantly relating to advocacy and public and sector-specific education, have been resourced through the Fund (see E/CN.6/1998/9).

2. National level

20. Approaches at the national level to gender-based violence against women emphasize policy and law reform; the introduction of services for victims of violence; sector-specific and public-education and programmes; training; and advocacy campaigns to address values, attitudes and actions related to violence against women.

21. The major focus of activity, however, has remained law reform, with many Member States seeking to provide women with comprehensive legal protection from various forms of violence. Criminal and civil provisions to address violence against women in the family have been adopted, with many States recognizing that violence by a husband should be treated in the same way as violence by a stranger. Sexual violence against women by their husbands has been criminalized in several States, while others have introduced legislation relating to female genital mutilation. Innovative measures to combat stalking and harassment have been introduced in several States, as have "sex tourism" provisions that allow for the prosecution of acts of sexual abuse by nationals abroad in domestic courts. Evidentiary and procedural reforms, which seek to ameliorate court proceedings, have also been introduced with the aim of encouraging victims of abuse to come forward.

22. Governments have continued to recognize the value of shelters and refuges and "hot lines"that offer support and assist survivors of forms of violence against women and also provide a focus for social services, such as counselling, public education and outreach services. A number have acknowledged the key contribution of women's non-governmental organizations in the development of measures to address violence against women, providing them with financial support and involving them in the development of government measures to address the problem.

23. In recognition of the important role of the criminal justice system, particularly the police, in the context of gender-based violence against women, Governments have encouraged the development of units within the police to address various forms of violence. Domestic violence units, police victim support sections and other specialized services, including anti-dowry cells, have been introduced in many countries, with officers working in these units seeking to develop specific expertise in the management of various forms of violence against women. Guidelines and protocols, often with accountability procedures, have also been introduced in some countries to ensure that victims are treated with sensitivity and to provide the best opportunity for a successful outcome in any legal proceedings.

24. Education and training for various sectors have also been priorities. Many Member States have introduced or supported education and training for police, criminal justice workers and others, such as prison and immigration officers. Comprehensive gender-awareness education, incorporating modules relating to gender-based violence against women, has been introduced for the judiciary and other judicial officers. Other sectors whose education and training needs have been addressed include health-care providers, including traditional birth attendants, welfare workers and teachers. Focused education and training measures to address specific forms of gender-based violence – for example, relating to traditional practices – have also been introduced. Education materials, including guidelines and protocols and interdisciplinary curriculum guides, have been developed, and in several Member States measures of accountability have been built into education and training strategies to ensure that lessons learned are implemented. A number have

also prepared resource guides to encourage the sharing of best practices and good ideas that can be adapted for use in other settings or jurisdictions.

25. Project proposals submitted to UNIFEM for funding under the Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women testify to the growing acknowledgement of the importance of public education, awareness and advocacy campaigns in fostering a recognition of women's human rights, an atmosphere of public disapproval of violence against women and community responsibility for such violence. Local and national campaigns using various media, such as drama, press and print including posters, radio, television and film, have been initiated in many countries by Governments, non-governmental organizations and other sectors of civil society, including the private sector. Campaigns have ranged from general campaigns on women's human rights to very specific campaigns relating to particular forms of violence, such as female genital mutilation, sexual harassment and trafficking. In several countries, comprehensive, innovative multimedia "zero tolerance" campaigns have been initiated. Such campaigns seek to create a community consensus that violence against women is unacceptable; evaluations have suggested that they have had an important impact on public perceptions of and tolerance for the forms of violence against women that they have addressed.

B. Strategies for accelerating implementation

26. Despite the clear progress in the achievement of its objectives, concerted endeavours are still required to accelerate implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and to have substantial impact on the elimination of violence against women.

27. Several factors continue to limit the impact of strategies that have been introduced or are proposed in this context. First, levels of understanding of violence against women and its root causes remain inadequate, with efforts to address the issue very often being reactive, focusing on symptoms and consequences instead of causes; second, approaches tend to be fragmented rather than integrated; third, sufficient resources have yet to be allocated to measures to address the problem; finally, competing values and beliefs about women, their place in the family, the community and society frequently serve to undermine the measures taken and their implementation. A number of recommendations for accelerating implementation of the Platform for Action are set out below. They recommend actions at the national and international levels based on suggestions made in various contexts, including previous expert group meetings convened by the Division for the Advancement of Women and the reports of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women.

28. The Platform for Action stresses the importance of developing a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to the elimination of violence against women (para. 119). It also expresses regret at the absence of adequate gender-disaggregated data and statistics, as well as documentation and research on all forms of violence against women, noting that this makes the elaboration of programmes and monitoring changes difficult (para. 120). The Platform makes specific recommendations in this regard, emphasizing the importance of wide dissemination of data and research into the impact and effect of any ameliorative measures (para. 129).

29. Member States may wish to consider developing a common basis for the collection of data and statistics on violence against women, and to recommend that all cases of violence against women, whether they are first reported to the police, health and social services, refuge or help lines or women's organizations, be systematically recorded. Member States may wish to recommend the development of guidelines and protocols for statistics and data collection, and research on violence against women.

30. In order to encourage appropriate resource allocation to address gender-based violence against women, Member States may also wish to recommend specific research into the social and economic consequences of violence against women, taking into account financial costs, such as housing, social services, health care, police protection, legal costs, lost working hours and insurance costs. Member States may also wish to recommend increased research into particular forms or sites of gender-based violence against women, such as violence against migrant women workers, trafficking and violence related to prostitution.

31. The impact of existing measures to address forms of violence against women has received little attention from researchers. As the development of effective strategies depends on knowledge of approaches that have or have not worked in the past, Member States should encourage impact assessment studies. In collaboration with international and national non-governmental organizations partners, the Division for the Advancement of Women, assisted by resources from the UNIFEM Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, has commissioned regional studies on the impact of measures to address domestic violence. Further impact studies on all

forms of violence against women, successful intervention models and preventive programmes should be initiated by Member States, the United Nations and other bodies, and their results should be widely disseminated.

32. Particular emphasis should be placed on the impact of legislative, evidentiary and procedural law reform in eliminating violence against women. Most countries that have adopted strategies to address forms of violence against women have concentrated on legal measures. It is rare for the impact of such legal measures to be assessed, but they are often replicated in other settings and jurisdictions.

33. Legal change is rarely sufficient to address the inequities that women face in the justice system, particularly since legal responses and reforms in this context are usually based on a model of gender neutrality in a gender-specific area and rarely take into account the systemic inequalities in the legal system that are based on outdated sexual stereotypes. In addition, legal reforms have usually been piecemeal, so that although important legal changes may have been introduced in one area, their effectiveness has been undermined by other laws and practices. The interaction of laws has sometimes inadvertently resulted in conditions that lead to imbalances in power relations between men and women and increase women's economic and social vulnerability to violence. For example, some countries have introduced increased penalties for trafficking in women and better implementation of controls against trafficking but have not introduced complementary reforms to protect victims of trafficking, especially against deportation. Again, the intersection of laws relating to female genital mutilation in some countries with immigration legislation has increased the vulnerabilities of victims of female genital mutilation and their families. Governments should ensure that legislation is comprehensively reviewed so that laws relating to other areas do not adversely affect victims of violence against women.

34. The most enlighted, integrated and comprehensive legislative reforms are only successful if they are fully implemented. Governments should ensure that legal reforms are fully implemented by an enlighted and educated justice system. One means of ensuring implementation is the introduction of measures of accountability for police, the judiciary, medical and psychiatric facilities, social services and others with regard to their treatment of violence against women. Measures of accountability should emphasise individual responsibility for the eradication of violence against women, while at the same time emphasizing the importance of gender-based violence as a critical community and national concern.

35. Continued multifaceted and multi-targeted measures to address simultaneously specific institutions, such as the criminal justice system, the judiciary, hospitals and detention centres, the military, the workplace, health and schools, are also required. Education and training strategies need to be continued and strengthened and should always incorporate mechanisms of accountability. Model guidelines and strategies for all sectors, such as those adopted by the General Assembly with respect to crime prevention and criminal justice system (see para. 16 above) are required, as are education and training protocols and manuals. Existing training and resource manuals that have proved effective, such as the "Strategies for confronting domestic violence: a Resource Manual" (ST/CSDA/20), should be widely disseminated and translated into local languages.

36. Although education and training is necessary to change behaviour towards victims, measures to bring about profound attitude change with regard to violence, to promote the message to perpetrators that violence is unacceptable and to reassure victims that they will be taken seriously and treated sympathetically are urgently required.

37. Governments should support the development of school programmes aimed at enhancing awareness among girls and boys of gender-based violence and its links with discrimination on the basis of sex. Programmes of peer mediation and conflict resolution for children should be developed, and special training for teachers to equip them to teach cooperation in the classroom should be introduced. Such programmes and training should be monitored for effectiveness and routinely shared among Member States. Education and training for all disciplines should incorporate non-violent conflict resolution and mediation skills.

38. Comprehensive public awareness and advocacy strategies seeking to make gender-based violence against women a critical concern to everyone should also be introduced. Such campaigns as the successful "zero tolerance" campaigns should be replicated and their results monitored. Steps should also be taken to address the generally harmful consequences arising from stereotypical definitions of male and female behaviour and the links between masculinity and violence. The notions that male violence against women is a natural expression of masculinity and that women are helpless and subordinate to men require constant challenge, and steps must be taken to ensure that media portrayals and expressions of popular culture do not reinforce those notions and thereby undermine existing measures to confront forms of violence against women. Governments and other actors should encourage the promotion of strong images of women and media portrayals

of men as cooperative, sensitive and full partners in the upbringing of children.

39. Governments should explore ways to emphasise the positive roles that men can play in preventing violence against women, and should also introduce programmes for perpetrators of violence against women that encourage men to take responsibility for their actions and to change their behaviour towards women. Programmes should be evaluated and successful interventions shared and replicated in other settings and jurisdictions.

40. Governments should recognize the role of non-governmental organizations in combating violence against women and should actively support their development, including through providing financial support.

41. Consistent with the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Platform for Action, Governments should recognize violence against women as one of the results of the subordination of women, and should recognize the relationship between this issue and other areas of discrimination. Governments should also recognize the connection between forms of gender-based violence against women and other forms of discrimination, and should introduce broad efforts to increase women's economic and social autonomy. They should ensure that women's human rights are fully respected and that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is fully implemented.

42. The impact of the Inter-American Convention on Violence against Women should be closely monitored by Member States. Governments should consider the possibility of adopting a comprehensive international legally binding instrument on violence against women, perhaps as a protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In the interim, Governments should consider introducing a voluntary reporting obligation to the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women that would call for biennial reports on the implementation of the Declaration in Member States, including assessment of the impact of measures introduced.

43. States should ratify and comply with International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions on the rights of migrant workers so as to reduce violence against women migrant workers. States should actively address the abuse of the rights of migrant workers, particularly women. States should ensure that migrant workers have the right to review their contracts in advance and are ensured of a minimum wage of regular and appropriate wages, maximum hours of work, paid holidays and social security/welfare benefits at least equal to those of their own nationals.

44. Governments should encourage coordination and cooperation between United Nations bodies and agencies with respect to violence against women. The United Nations should be requested to establish a readily accessible database of good practices and lessons learned relating to gender-based violence.

III. Women and armed conflict

45. Chapter II of the Beijing Platform for Action notes the change in international politics as a result of the end of the cold war and diminished competition between the super-Powers, including reduced threat of global armed conflict and improved international relations and prospects for peace between nations. At the same time, it recalls that wars of aggression, armed conflicts, civil wars and terrorism continue to plague many parts of the world and that grave violations of the human rights of women occur, particularly in times of armed conflict, and include murder, torture, systematic rape, forced pregnancy and forced abortion, in particular under policies of ethnic cleansing (para. 11).

46. The critical area "Women and armed conflict" (chap. IV.E) of the Platform for Action addresses the effect of armed and other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation. It emphasizes that peace is inextricably linked to equality between women and men, but that aggression, foreign occupation, ethnic and other types of conflicts are an ongoing reality affecting women and men in nearly every region. Noting that international humanitarian law, which prohibits attacks on civilians, is at times systematically ignored, and that human rights are often violated in armed conflict, affecting the civilian population, especially women, children, the elderly and the disabled (para. 131), the Platform states that although entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict and terrorism, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex (para. 135).

A. Recent developments and trends

47. Women civilians and combatants may become targets of abuse from different aggressors, including regular army and militia members, irregular forces and members of their own community. Although the abuses that women experience take many different forms, recent extensive and reliable evidence has documented their particular vulnerability to sexual abuse, rape, sexual mutilation,

sexually humiliating treatment, forcible impregnation, sexual slavery and forcible prostitution (see S/1994/674; E/CN.4/1994/5; E/CN.4/1993/50, para. 61; A/51/657, paras. 16-18; E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996, para. 10).

48. Reports suggest that gender-based abuses are not an accident of war, nor incidental adjuncts to armed conflict. Rather, these forms of persecution reflect the inequalities that women face in their everyday lives in peacetime. They may also constitute a deliberate strategy designed to intimidate or undermine and inflict deep and lasting damage on entire communities. The Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women has suggested that gender-based persecutions, such as rape, in situations of armed conflict, are not sexual but aggressive acts, providing satisfaction because of the humilation and helplessness of the victim. She has noted that these abuses are used as instruments to punish, intimidate, coerce, humiliate and degrade (see E/CN.4/1995/42, paras. 277-281).

49. Mass groups of citizens flee the destruction and physical harm caused by conflict and become internally displaced persons or refugees. The majority of these uprooted and displaced persons are females of all ages, including unaccompanied girls and older women whose male family members are combatants, have disappeared or died. Refugee women and girls, particularly those with inadequate documentation or who are single and unaccompanied, are especially vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse during flight, on arrival in refugee camps and in the country of ultimate settlement.[4] Internally displaced women are often even more vulnerable because the Governments that have been unable to prevent their displacement remain responsible for their safety while they are displaced. Perpetrators include the military, bandit gangs, border guards, army and resistance units and male refugees (see E/CN.4/1995/42, paras. 297-302).[5]

50. Problems faced by women in refugee camps include lack of physical security and privacy, sexual exploitation, physical and mental illness, lack of suitable occupation and income-generating opportunities, and lack of control over matters traditionally within their domain. The social dislocation and disruption that accompanies flight from armed conflict may also lead to increased intimate violence.

51. At the same time, during times of armed conflict and the collapse of society that it entails, women, whether or not displaced, play an especially important role in attempting to preserve social and familial order. Historically, neither the particular forms of harm suffered by women nor their role in maintaining some form of social order during conflict and in post-conflict reconstruction have been addressed in legal and political processes.

52. Victims of gender-based abuses, such as rape and other sexual assaults, in armed conflict are faced with overwhelming problems. Like victims of such crimes in times of peace, they may feel ashamed and fearful of rejection and ostracism by their families and communities. In times of conflict, however, their trauma extends beyond their personal suffering to encompass the conflict. Family members and friends may have been killed during the conflict, and their personal problems may appear to them to be of little significance. Those who have become pregnant by force or as a result of rape may experience particular problems, and may reject, deny or conceal the pregnancy, attempt self-induced abortion or suicide. Many victims may experience sexual and reproductive health problems but may be reluctant to seek help because of shame or fear of stigmatization. Health problems may include sexually transmitted diseases, including human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), the consequences of mutilation and complications resulting from unsafe abortion. They will also be psychologically scarred by their own experiences and those of their families and communities.

53. Significant developments in the treatment of harms experienced by women in situations of conflict have occurred. The ad hoc Tribunals for war crimes committed in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda both explicitly incorporate rape as a crime against humanity within their jurisdictions. The statute of the Rwanda Tribunal also expressly includes rape, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault as a violation of article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions and of Additional Protocol II. Through prosecutorial policies, sexual violence has been charged under the statute of the former Yugoslavia Tribunal as constituting a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilians in Times of War, as constitutive of enslavement and torture, and as crimes against humanity.[6] Indictments have now been issued by both Tribunals charging sexual violence as genocide.[7] The rules of procedure and evidence of the Tribunals recognize the need for particular evidentiary exclusions in cases of rape and sexual assault. The statute and rules of the Tribunals also provide for a range of other protective measures for witnesses testifying in Court (see S/25704, para. 108).

54. The United Nations Compensation Commission, which was created by the Security Council to compensate for losses suffered as a result of Iraq's unlawful invasion of Kuwait in 1990, recognized sexual violence as a compensable

war-related harm.[8] The General Assembly Preparatory Committee on the Establishment of a Permanent International Criminal Court has included rape and other forms of sexual violence as crimes over which the proposed court would have jurisdiction. The Inter-American and European regional human rights bodies have found rape in conflict to constitute violations of the human rights obligations of States under their respective human rights conventions.[9] At the national level, criminal and civil proceedings have been initiated against individuals alleged to have perpetrated gender-based violence against women in conflict situations.[10]

55. In 1991 the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) issued guidelines on the protection of refugee women that were designed to help the staff of UNHCR and its implementing partners to identify the specific protection issues, problems and risks facing refugee women. *Inter alia*, the guidelines cover assessing the protection situation of refugee women, addressing the physical security and legal protection problems that they face, and methods for improvement in camp design and operation. UNHCR has also issued more specific guidelines on the prevention of and response to sexual violence among refugees, which examine the nature and causes of sexual violence against refugee women and propose measures to prevent its occurrence. Some States have formulated guidelines for decision makers with respect to gender-related asylum claims.[11]

B. Strategies for accelerating implementation

56. Further progress is required before the actions identified in the Platform for Action are implemented fully and women no longer experience violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in times of armed conflict, or as refugee or displaced women. The Division for the Advancement of Women convened an expert group meeting on gender-based persecution, organized jointly with the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University, Toronto, from 9 to 12 November 1997.[12] Emphasizing the interconnections between the critical area "Women and armed conflict" (chap. IV.E) and other parts of the Platform for Action, including the critical areas "Violence against women" (chap. IV.D) and "Human rights of women" (chap. IV.I), the meeting made recommendations relating to legal definitions and standards; training, education and dissemination; the participation of women in decision-making; and implementation, monitoring and accountability. The recommendations for action at the national, international and regional levels are set out below based on the results of the expert group meeting.

1. Protection during armed conflict

57. Greater efforts are required to understand the particular ways in which women are affected by armed conflict. Sexual violence is only one aspect of the problems confronting women in armed conflict. Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to collect and disseminate information and statistics about the effect of armed conflict upon women in all areas of their lives. Greater attention should be paid to understanding the way that characteristics other than gender, including race, ethnicity and sexual orientation, play in determining the way that women experience armed conflict. The fact-finding and monitoring capacities of United Nations human rights mechanisms, and national and international non-governmental organizations should be strengthened.

58. Special attention should be directed to the long-term health needs of women affected by armed conflict, including psychological needs arising from trauma and the effects of violations of reproductive rights, such as being forced to bear children or denied the freedom to bear children. The experts proposed that initiatives to maintain and reconstruct health systems during and after conflict should be taken by Member States and United Nations bodies, including WHO, to focus on the provision of physical and mental health services for women who have suffered the effects of armed conflict.

59. The expert group meeting recommended that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights ensure that gender is fully incorporated as a component in its field operations. The Office and other United Nations system field operations should draw on the expertise within the United Nations, including in the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM and UNICEF, non-governmental organizations and others, as appropriate, to develop gender sensitive methodologies and guidelines and take cognizance of violations of women's human rights.

60. Member States should ensure that support is made available to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to take measures to ensure the security of human rights monitors in order to facilitate the performance of their tasks.

61. Experts recommended that the gender issues that arise in the creation or operation of "safe havens" or "secured zones" as a means of protection in situations of armed conflict should be examined. An expert group meeting

should be convened to consider peace-keeping forces, their membership and accountability, and their role in the protection of civilians, including women and men, in areas of armed conflict, with special reference to the internally displaced and those located in or moved to safe havens or security zones.

62. Member States, international and regional intergovernmental organizations and others should ensure that camps for refugees and those who are internally displaced are designed in accordance with the 1995 UNHCR guidelines on preventing and responding to sexual violence against refugee women, which seek to minimize the opportunities for sexual and other forms of violence against women. Steps should also be taken to ensure that women are closely involved in the distribution of humanitarian supplies to ensure their needs are taken into account.

63. United Nations human rights treaty bodies should be encouraged to take account of sexual violence and other abuses against women in situations of armed conflict, as well as abuses experienced by refugee women and those who are internally displaced, in their consideration of the reports of States parties, as they formulate general comments and recommendations, and in their procedures, such as investigations initiated under article 20 of the Convention against Torture, and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

64. States parties to treaties, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, should include information on the measures that they are taking with respect to protecting, respecting and fulfilling the human rights of women refugees and asylum seekers, internally displaced women, returnees and women affected by armed conflict, both within their borders and beyond, in their initial and periodic reports.

2. Legal definitions and standards

65. Existing and future international legal definitions and standards should be examined to determine whether they adequately encompass claims brought by women and address women's interests. Women's interests must be incorporated in mainstream legal principles, and definitions should reflect the progressive development of the law. Particular care should be taken to ensure that a gender perspective is incorporated in the proposed international criminal court.

66. Experts suggested that the governing statute of the proposed court should declare in its substantive part that all its provisions be governed by the international legal norm of non-discrimination on the basis of sex. Sex-based crimes should be referred to in the statute of the court and defined in such a way that their definition can evolve in accordance with the progressive development of international law.

67. Redress for victims of armed conflict, in particular compensation for women subjected to sexual violence, including in the framework of the court, should be a priority for Member States.

68. Sexual violence in armed conflict should be considered as constituting torture as defined in international human rights law. In appropriate cases, sexual violence should be prosecuted as torture before the ad hoc war crimes tribunals and the court.

69. Member States should fully cooperate with the ad hoc Tribunals and the proposed court in order to ensure that those bodies operate effectively. Member States should introduce legislation and other measures at the national level, providing, *inter alia*, for the service of arrest warrants and the extradition of alleged international criminals.

70. Member States should recognize that discrimination in the interpretation and application of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1977 Protocol is in contradistinction to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. States parties to the Refugee Convention should adopt guidelines relating to gender-related asylum claims. The definition of "refugee" in the 1951 Convention and its 1977 Protocol should be interpreted in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian law.

71. Sexual violence in the context of armed conflict should be regarded as "persecution" in international refugee law. Where a woman's sex or gender is a significant reason for persecution, her fear of persecution should be recognized by decision makers because of her membership in a particular social group under the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

3. Training, education and dissemination

72. Information on the jurisdiction and procedures for accessing the ad hoc war crimes Tribunals, human rights treaty bodies, and other relevant mechanisms should be widely and actively disseminated by Member States, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, including to women's groups and in local languages.

73. Adequate professional support and appropriate gender training should be provided for all departments of the ad hoc war crimes Tribunals and the proposed international criminal court, especially the witness protection unit of the registry.

74. Legal education, including continuing legal education for members of all levels of the legal profession, should

incorporate international humanitarian law, human rights law and gender issues. Continuing legal education should be available to the office of the prosecution, the staff of the registry and the members of the defence bars of the ad hoc war crimes Tribunals, the proposed international criminal court and the international judiciary.

75. Support for the continuing development and psychological needs of the staff members of the ad hoc war crimes Tribunals, human rights monitors and special rapporteurs should be made available, such as through the appointment of professional counsellors.

76. An adequate protection programme for witnesses and potential witnesses and other forms of ancillary services, including physical and mental health, social and other services to promote the interests of witnesses and potential witnesses and to ensure the effective functioning of the ad hoc war crimes Tribunals and the proposed international criminal court, should be ensured. A trust fund to assist in the provision of financial resources for witness protection and related services should be established.

77. The expert group meeting emphasized that all relevant international bodies, including the International Law Commission, the ad hoc war crimes Tribunals, the proposed international criminal court, the human rights treaty bodies, and extra-conventional human rights mechanisms, should reflect an equitable gender balance at all levels. The recruitment, appointment and promotion of all staff, including at the ad hoc war crimes Tribunals and the proposed courts should be transparent and governed by the policy statements of the Secretary-General with respect to gender balance within United Nations agencies. The same principles should apply to seconded personnel. States should be required to conform to the policies of gender balance, gender integration and gender mainstreaming agreed in the Beijing Platform for Action, General Assembly resolutions and the agreed conclusions 1997/2 of the Economic and Social Council mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system. Gender balance in international judicial posts should be an explicitly stated goal, and should be a consideration in judicial appointment, alongside the existing requirements of geographic distribution and professional and personal qualities. Networks to identify appropriate candidates should be established and databases maintained by the Division for the Advancement of Women. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women should develop proactive roles in monitoring those policies.

78. In order to minimize the trauma for women associated with talking about sexual violence, the ad hoc war crimes Tribunals and the proposed international criminal court should ensure that female investigators, translators and other necessary personnel are available.

79. The expert group meeting recommended that all United Nations peacekeepers should receive training in international humanitarian law, human rights law and gender issues. The training and pre-training programmes of United Nations peacekeepers with regard to their mission should reflect sensitivity to women's security rights and be informed on cultural specificities. Trainers should include civilians, women and experts in gender issues. The code of conduct for United Nations peacekeepers, which, *inter alia*, addresses behaviour of forces with respect to women, should be kept under review and its impact monitored for effectiveness. In the training of peacekeeping forces and preparations of materials for that purpose, the expertise of the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM and UNICEF should be drawn upon and utilized. The impact of training should be independently monitored, evaluated and assessed on a long-term basis.

80. Mechanisms for monitoring the behaviour of peacekeeping forces should be introduced, particularly with respect to the impact of their activities on women. Monitoring mechanisms should be accessible to affected civilians, and should reflect the views of the civilian population. Alleged violations of human rights by United Nations peacekeepers should be investigated, and should attract disciplinary action and appropriate sanction.

81. The experts also proposed that ad hoc committees to consider the deployment of peacekeeping forces in particular areas or in respect of particular conflicts should be established, and should work in partnership with UNHCR, the Division for the Advancement of Women and UNHCR with a view to ensuring full protection of human rights for all and a gender-sensitive approach in situations of armed conflict.

82. In accordance with their legal obligations in the Geneva Conventions, States should ensure the dissemination of those Conventions and their Additional Protocols at the national, regional and international levels. Steps should be taken to disseminate and enhance the understanding of the substantive law of the ad hoc war crimes Tribunals, and – as it emerges – of the proposed international criminal court. Standards in international human rights instruments and methods of implementing those standards should also be widely disseminated. Electronic as well as traditional means should be used for the purposes of dissemination.

83. Tolerance for diversity, respect for human rights and gender sensitivity should be included in national education curricula at primary, secondary and higher levels, including in teacher training. Curricula should also incorporate international humanitarian law and human rights law, including the jurisdiction and work of the ad hoc war crimes Tribunals.

84. Land-mine awareness classes that are accessible to everyone, including women, should be conducted in afflicted areas.

85. States should be encouraged to ensure full incorporation and implementation of international humanitarian law, including the jurisprudence of the ad hoc war crimes Tribunals and the proposed international criminal court into national legal systems. Law enforcement personnel should be trained with respect to the obligations resulting from this body of law, in particular its gender-related aspects.

86. The training of all persons involved in refugee determination should include the impact of trauma, cultural difference and sex difference on the willingness of women to disclose gender-based persecution, their ability to present their stories, and assumed links between demeanour and credibility. Training materials consistent with the guidelines of UNHCR should be developed by States and made available to others. Compliance with training directives should be monitored and the impact of training independently assessed.

87. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) should be encouraged to take further steps to increase the gender-sensitive interpretation of international humanitarian law, including practices and policies relating to internally displaced women. ICRC should be encouraged to enhance the status of its 1992 aide-mémoire relative to sexual crimes in times of war and make it more widely known.

IV. Human rights of women

88. Attention to the human rights of women has acquired a new dimension over the course of the last decade. Although the 1985 Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women proposed various basic strategies for women's legal equality in its chapter on equality, little attention was paid to international human rights law as a framework and an obligation of Governments in the realization of women's equality in the chapters on development and peace. Since then, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as other global United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s, have reaffirmed that enjoyment by women of their human rights is a priority for Governments and the United Nations and essential for the advancement of women (Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, para. II.36; Platform for Action, para. 213).

89. Mainstream national (see E/CN.6/1998/6) and international mechanisms for the protection and promotion of human rights, including United Nations human rights treaty bodies, non-conventional mechanisms, such as the Commission on Human Rights and its special rapporteurs, working groups and similar mechanisms (see E/CN.4/1997/40) are increasingly paying attention to the full and equal enjoyment by women of their human rights and to violations of human rights that are particular to women. These mechanisms are also increasingly responding to the challenge of paying attention to gender factors that affect women's ability to enjoy fully and equally all human rights they are entitled to.[13] Non-governmental organizations and organizations of civil society continue to be critical actors in awareness-raising regarding women's enjoyment of their human rights. In those efforts, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[14] and the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, together with the Platform for Action, provide an essential basis and guidance for a gender-sensitive conceptualization, interpretation and implementation of human rights.

90. Human rights require that States accord priority consideration to their fulfilment (see Beijing Platform for Action, para. 213; Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, paras. I.1, I.4 and II.36). Rights are not simply a matter of policy choices for Governments but impose legally sanctioned duties to respect and ensure the rights in question. Moreover, the full recognition of rights requires the creation of effective channels of redress to hold States accountable for violations of those rights. Guaranteed rights are reinforced by international mechanisms of monitoring and supervision that ensure governmental accountability for their implementation and realization at the national level. Women's empowerment is advanced by establishing concrete standards and mechanisms of accountability for violations of human rights, encompassing civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights. Thus, the rights approach is being increasingly pursued by women, women's organizations and other entities seeking to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.[15]

A. Framework for women's enjoyment of human rights, with emphasis on economic and social rights

91. The Beijing Declaration (para. 38) and Platform for Action provide a framework for translating the provisions and positive forces of human rights law into concrete actions for achieving gender equality. Building upon the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and taking it further, the Platform for Action devotes one of its 12 critical areas of concern to "human rights of women" (chap. IV.I), and takes a comprehensive approach to women's human rights, calling for an active and visible policy of mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all policies and programmes (para. 229). It underlines the importance of gender analysis in addressing the systematic and systemic nature of discrimination against women in order to achieve the full realization of human rights for all (para. 222). Both the Fourth World Conference on Women and other recent United Nations conferences have contributed to the understanding that women's equality and non-discrimination between women and men, as well as women's equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, do not occur automatically as a result of the overall protection and promotion of human rights (see Platform for Action, para. 215; Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, para. I.18). They have thus strengthened an approach whereby these goals are to be addressed explicitly and systematically at all stages of the implementation of human rights instruments and conference outcomes, including in the conceptualization of the protected rights and freedoms.

92. Human rights and fundamental freedoms are inherent in the human person and belong to women and men alike. Referring to equal entitlement guarantees contained in major international human rights instruments, mainstream human rights approaches have long insisted on the presumption that human rights norms are gender neutral or unaffected by gender. However, structural imbalances of power between women and men, the systemic nature of discrimination against women, and the general absence of women in law creation and implementation continue to reflect disproportionately the experiences of men and exclude the experiences of women. These imbalances also influence the generally accepted understanding of international human rights law, whose structure and substance may present or preserve obstacles to women's equality. Many of the substantive norms of international law are defined in relation to men's experience, and are stated in terms of discrete violations of rights in the public realm. In addition, inattention to rights of particular interest to women in the international human rights discourse has resulted in neglect and pervasive denial of the rights of women, in particular in the private sphere. These factors have contributed to a lack of enjoyment of human rights by women that has gender-specific explanations at its roots.

93. Women's equality cannot be achieved by treating women and men identically, nor through protective measures for women. Identical treatment ignores women's and men's different social realities and gendered roles. Protective measures for women do not challenge the source and nature of women's subordination and tend to perpetuate gender stereotypes. A focus on gender recognizes that women's unequal status is based on and is perpetuated by structures of systemic inequality and discrimination against women. The standard of measurement in the realization of women's equality is not the current male standard of equality, which would simply be a reaffirmation of the status quo. Rather, a new standard of equality should be envisaged based on a reconsideration of current assumptions and a reconceptualization of the meaning of equality from a gender perspective to reflect the visions, interests and needs of women as well as those of men.

94. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action noted that the international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis (para. I.5). Notwithstanding the firm commitment to the indivisibility and interrelatedness of all human rights (as reaffirmed in the Beijing Platform for Action, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and elsewhere), economic and social rights remain less well understood than other human rights, and are treated by States in a different way than civil and political rights.[16] Although various justifications for such differential treatment have been advanced, it has also been emphasized that both civil and political and economic and social rights entail positive and negative obligations, obligations of conduct and of result, and obligations to respect, protect, and promote and fulfil.[17]

95. Women face constraints and vulnerabilities which differ from those that affect men and are of significant relevance in the enjoyment of human rights. In addition, these variables mean that women may be affected by violations of economic and social rights in ways that are different from men. Gender factors thus need to be fully integrated at all three levels of States' duties in relation to economic and social rights - the duties to respect, protect, and promote and fulfil.

96. Women are disproportionately affected by poverty and social marginalization, and systemic and systematic

discrimination against women result in deep patterns of inequality and disadvantage. Many women experience multiple barriers in gaining access to economic and social rights, such as employment, housing, land, food and social security. Those barriers include the disproportionate burden of reproductive and caring work performed by women; the sexual division of labour and segregated employment practices; discriminatory traditional and cultural laws and practices; unequal representation by women in political and other decision-making structures at all levels; and widespread violence perpetrated against women. These constraints are particularly acute for women who also face discrimination on one or more other grounds (see Platform for Action, para. 225). Even when women do have access to socio-economic rights, they frequently experience discrimination in the enjoyment of those rights. This discrimination is manifested, for example, in unequal pay for work of equal value, inferior benefits under social assistance programmes (as compared to the more favourable benefits under social insurance schemes) and insecure tenure to land and housing.

97. Proactive policies are required to ensure that women enjoy economic and social rights. However, the explicit and implicit inequalities that affect women's enjoyment of those rights can be exacerbated by policies introduced to ensure that women fully enjoy economic and social rights if policy makers fail to take account of the reality of the lives of women as well as men. In most societies, women and men do not occupy the same position. For example, although poverty affects both women and men, women experience poverty differently from men.[18] Measures introduced to address poverty that fail to take account of the differential impact of poverty resulting from gender may serve to exacerbate and entrench this violation of economic rights where women are concerned: by failing to address gender, they may also fail to support and strengthen women's capacity to break the cycle of poverty.

98. The rights of women to enjoy civil, political, economic and social rights are often subsumed in a wider societal struggle for the realization of rights. For example, women's rights to enjoy economic and social resources are frequently postponed until all members of society are able to take full advantage of those rights. Far from diluting the wider societal struggle for the realization of economic and social rights, the identification of women's independent entitlement to those rights can strengthen the general quest for realization of human rights. In addition, postponing women's entitlement to full enjoyment of human rights entrenches and legitimizes existing inequalities based on gender. Therefore, specific constraints affecting women in the enjoyment of economic and social rights should be identified in the societal struggle for rights so that inequalities within societies can be addressed at an early stage and a measure of gender equality ultimately achieved.

99. A gender-sensitive methodology needs to be adopted to ascertain the extent to which women enjoy economic and social rights and to determine violations of those rights. Data disaggregated by sex and gender-specific information help to ensure that the different experiences of women in the enjoyment of those rights, as well as their violation, are rendered visible, especially since violations of women's economic and social rights are seldom perceived as such.

100. It is important to interpret existing human rights norms creatively so that they can be applied to those experiences of women that are different from those of men. Since there are an infinite variety of ways in which women's work can be rendered invisible and their contribution to society can remain unaccounted for, Governments have a responsibility to make those activities visible. Many opportunities are available to United Nations human rights treaty bodies and other monitoring mechanisms for creative interpretation. Such mechanisms need to be perceptive and sensitive to the activities of women in different societies that meet an innovative and gender-sensitive definition of work. The definition of some economic and social rights in existing instruments that are not based explicitly on the experiences or realities of women's lives might need to be supplemented by newly formulated rights that take account of the life patterns of women.

B. Strategies for accelerating implementation

101. It was against this background that the Division for the Advancement of Women convened an expert group meeting on the theme "Promoting women's enjoyment of their economic and social rights", organized jointly with the Institute for Human Rights at the Åbo Akademi University of Turku (Åbo), Finland, from 1 to 4 December 1997.[19] Focusing on economic and social rights of women not only allowed the expert group meeting to consider the critical area of concern "Human rights of women" (chap. IV.I) of the Platform for Action but also emphasized the interrelationship of this area of the Platform with other critical areas of concern. In particular, it drew attention to the connections with the critical areas "Women and poverty" (chap. IV.A) and "Women and the economy" (chap. IV.F). These interdependences highlight the rights-based approach that underlies the Platform for Action and the pivotal role these

rights play with regard to the overall goal of the Platform for Action: the achievement of gender equality. Recommendations for action at the national level and at the international and regional levels are set out below based on the expert group meeting.

1. Action at the national level

102. Although many actors have a role at the national level in promoting women's enjoyment of their economic and social rights, primary responsibility for ensuring enjoyment of those rights rests with Governments, as follows:

(a) Constitutional guarantees and the legal framework: Governments should guarantee economic and social rights in national Constitutions; put in place the necessary legislative and regulatory framework guaranteeing a gendered interpretation of these rights; regulate the activities of individuals or groups so as to prevent them from violating women's economic and social rights, and enforce such regulations; and create and maintain infrastructure that provides remedies for violations through acts of omission or acts of commission of economic and social rights, and strengthen domestic enforcement mechanisms;

(b) National action plans: national action plans on human rights of women should cover strategies for implementing treaty obligations and responsibilities from other instruments containing human rights commitments into national law and policy; contain methodologies that identify different types of women's experiences and needs in the area of human rights; cover data collection and the development of qualitative indicators, and establish time-bound, targeted outcomes and specific steps to achieve those outcomes; allocate and reallocate resources to implement plans and reflect gender policies in national budgets; create and/or maintain an institutional framework to enable women to enjoy, enforce and protect their rights, and to increase women's legal literacy; and establish visible and transparent reporting mechanisms on progress in the implementation of the plan;

(c) Gender-sensitive policies: Governments should establish national gender equality objectives, based on the appropriate constitutional mandate and the legal framework; review and formulate development policies in all areas, such as in the areas of agriculture, health, education, work and employment, in a way that targets explicitly the enjoyment by women of their economic and social rights; and establish monitoring systems to assess the impact of policies on particular violations that women encounter with a view to reviewing and revising those policies. Policies should aim to ensure women's equal access to economic resources and secure land tenure;

(d) National human rights institutions: independent national human rights institutions should be mandated to monitor explicitly the situation with regard to women's enjoyment of human rights, including their socio-economic rights; should have the power to request relevant information from State organs on measures taken towards the full realization of economic and social rights of women and should have the power to recommend legislative and policy changes; should have the mandate to conduct public inquiries to investigate human rights issues, identify structural problems, recommend solutions, and educate the general public on human rights matters, particularly women's human rights issues; and should collaborate closely with national machinery for the advancement of women;

(e) Public awareness and civil society actions: public awareness campaigns should be conducted to publicize women's human rights issues, including violations of these rights. Civil society should be involved through participatory processes in the development of plans to promote and protect women's enjoyment of socio-economic rights. They should also be involved in setting realistic targets, monitoring progress and contributing to the implementation of such plans.

2. Action at the international and regional levels

103. Full integration of gender factors in all policies and programmes of international and regional organizations is important for accelerating women's enjoyment of their human rights. Relevant mandates emanating from the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on gender mainstreaming should be implemented and effectively integrated in all activities of these bodies. Greater collaboration between international and regional bodies dealing with human rights and gender equality should be pursued. Further efforts are necessary to move beyond recognition to gender-sensitive interpretations of economic and social rights and the development of strategies for ensuring their implementation.

104. The following recommendations are addressed to specific bodies and mechanisms:

(a) United Nations Charter-based bodies:

(i) All Charter-based bodies should pay greater attention and devote more time to economic and social rights and the gender dimensions of those rights;

(ii) The work on the drafting and adoption of optional protocols establishing communications procedures under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights should be completed as soon as possible, especially since it is in the framework of such individual communications procedures that the gendered content and meaning of such rights can be clarified and given form and substance;

(iii) The Commission on the Status of Women should give further consideration to enhancing the communications procedure of the Commission to make it an effective instrument for remedying violations of women's human rights, including women's economic and social rights, in particular by increasing the transparency of the procedure and ensuring the independence of the body reviewing communications;

(iv) The Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights should keep under review obstacles and progress in the field of women's rights relating to economic resources in order to ensure progress in realizing women's economic and social rights. To that end, the Commission on the Status of Women should consider the appointment of a thematic special rapporteur in the field of women's economic and social rights;

(v) The Commission on the Status of Women or the Commission on Human Rights should request that an authoritative study on the relationship between global financial institutions and international human rights norms from a gender perspective be prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women, in conjunction with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

(vi) The Commission on Human Rights should continue to review the attention that special rapporteurs and other non-conventional mechanisms pay to gender issues. Training and briefings should be provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in cooperation with the Division for the Advancement of Women, to the special rapporteurs and other non-conventional mechanisms on the gender dimensions of their mandates and the potential impact of their work on women's enjoyment of their economic and social rights;

(b) States parties to human rights instruments:

(i) States parties to international human rights instruments should renew their efforts to achieve a more appropriate gender balance in the membership of male-dominated human rights treaty bodies. In selecting candidates, States should recognize that an awareness of and sensitivity to gender issues in the field of human rights is an essential aspect of the expertise expected of an independent expert who is to serve as a member of a human rights treaty body;

(ii) States parties to international human rights instruments should request the Secretary-General to ensure that future editions of the *Manual on Human Rights Reporting*[20] fully reflect gender issues in the discussions relating to all human rights treaties covered by the Manual;

(iii) States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights should ensure that the policies and programmes of financial institutions to which they belong do not violate the rights that they have bound themselves to respect as States parties to those treaties. They should encourage the financial institutions to adopt policies that enhance and improve women's full and equal access to economic and social rights;

(c) Specialized agencies of the United Nations system:

(i) Specialized agencies of the United Nations system should take active measures to enhance their engagement, in a systematic and sustained manner, with the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in order to strengthen the Committee's attention to women's enjoyment of their economic and social rights;

(ii) Specialized agencies, in particular the ILO, should conduct research to identify areas of women's work that are insufficiently covered by international norms and standards, and to contribute to the gender-sensitive interpretation of existing standards and norms. Particular attention should be paid to providing adequate standards of protection and promotion of women workers' rights in the informal sector. ILO constituents should devote increased attention to sexual harassment in the workplace as a violation of women's human rights, and as an obstacle to women's active participation in the world of work. The ILO and other specialized agencies should further disseminate international standards and norms relating to women's

economic and social rights, and should encourage States to ratify or accede to such instruments;

(iii) Initiatives of specialized agencies that indicate greater awareness of and commitment to the rights and gender dimensions of their mandates should be consolidated, utilized and further developed by all actors in the field of human rights and gender equality. The example of the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and Plan of Action agreed at the World Food Summit organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 1996 should be used as an example in this regard;

(iv) Steps should be taken to integrate, where appropriate, a rights approach to the policies and programmes of specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system. As in the case of UNICEF and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, this may include the elaboration of standards, whether by way of treaty or declaration, statements of principles, recommendations or other normative measures;

(v) Specialized agencies should sensitize staff to the human rights and gender dimensions of their work;

(vi) Specialized agencies, making full use of the expertise and support of gender units or focal points – such as the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat – should institutionalize the mainstreaming of a gender perspective at all levels and in all areas. Wherever possible, strategies to mainstream a gender perspective in specialized agencies should be closely linked to measures that are designed to integrate a human rights dimension into the work of the agencies;

(d) Regional bodies: various regional bodies should undertake steps so as to reinforce the integration of women's full and equal enjoyment of their economic and social rights within their respective mandates. The establishment of an African court on human rights, as well as the adoption of an additional protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights concerning women's rights, should be supported and encouraged. Collaboration between the Inter-American Commission on Women and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights should be strengthened. The Council of Europe should be encouraged to restart its negotiations relating to the elaboration and adoption of an additional protocol to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms recognizing a fundamental right to equality between women and men as an independent, substantive right;

(e) International and regional trade and financial institutions:

(i) International and regional trade and financial institutions should be urged to ensure that their policies, directives and other outputs enhance women's enjoyment of economic and social rights. This would require as a first step the identification of key gender-equality objectives as an integral part of the overall policy goals of those institutions;

(ii) The World Bank and other international financial institutions should be urged to integrate human rights impact assessments and gender impact analysis into the programme formulation procedures of the organization;

(f) Non-governmental organizations:

(i) International non-governmental organizations should both reflect gender-equality objectives in their policies and programmes, and fully integrate economic and social rights into their activities;

(ii) Non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to submit to human rights treaty bodies "shadow" reports on economic and social rights that include a gender analysis. National non-governmental organizations, especially non-governmental organizations not in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, should be encouraged to contribute in innovative ways to the work of United Nations human rights treaty bodies, particularly to their consideration of States parties' reports. Information submitted to United Nations special procedures and mechanisms on human rights should include gender-specific information. They should also target other international bodies and processes with a significant economic and social rights and gender dimension, such as the ILO, WHO, FAO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank (including its Inspection Panel), and the World Trade Organization;

(g) Transnational corporations: the activities of transnational corporations require action at the national and international levels to encourage and enforce conduct conducive to women's enjoyment of economic and social rights. Governments should enact and enforce laws to prevent and prohibit violations of economic and social rights by transnational corporations, including discrimination against women in this sphere. Governments should create incentives to encourage transnational corporations to

actively promote women's enjoyment of economic and social rights.

V. The girl child

105. In the critical area "The girl child" (chap. IV.L), the Beijing Platform for Action emphasizes that discrimination and neglect in childhood can initiate a lifelong downward spiral of deprivation and exclusion from the social mainstream (para. 260). It recommends that "initiatives be taken to prepare girls to participate actively, effectively and equally with boys at all levels of social, economic, political and cultural leadership" (para. 260). Governments are called upon to eliminate all forms of discrimination against girls, including in education, skills development and training and in health and nutrition, and to eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls, their rights and increase awareness of girls' needs and potential. The concerns of girls and young women addressed in this critical area of the Platform for Action are amplified in its other critical areas.

106. The issue of the girl child was firmly placed on the international agenda by the 1990 Declaration of the World Summit for Children, which accorded priority attention to the girl child's survival, development and protection. At the World Summit, the international community acknowledged that the equal rights of girls and the equal participation of women in the social, cultural, economic and political life of societies is a prerequisite for successful and sustainable development. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994 also highlighted the need to improve the situation of the girl child, eliminate all forms of discrimination against her and increase public awareness of her value. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Child contain mutually reinforcing principles which, if fully implemented, would ensure the protection and fulfilment of the rights of girls and contribute to ending gender-based discrimination.

A. The situation of the girl child

107. Despite the world community's agreed commitments and legal obligations and general progress in improving the health, nutrition and education of children, the situation of girls continues to be disadvantaged compared to that of boys in many parts of the world. Prevailing cultural and social attitudes about girls' roles and the division of labour in everyday life influences girls' status. Worldwide, approximately 500 million children start primary school, but more than 100 million children – two thirds of them girls – drop out before completing four years of primary school.[21] In many countries, girls are breastfed for shorter periods than boys.[21] They are fed less than their brothers, forced to work harder, provided less schooling and denied equal access to medical care. They marry earlier and face greater risks of dying in adolescence and early adulthood because of early and too closely spaced pregnancies. In societies in which sons are preferred over daughters for social, cultural and economic reasons, from early stages of their lives girls become aware that less value is placed upon them.[21]

108. In many countries, girls are expected more often than boys to assist their mothers and labour inside the home or in family enterprises. These efforts are unacknowledged or underrated by family members, and rarely reflected in national accounts. In many families and communities, there is also less consideration and support given to girls' education and career development than to boys'. Furthermore, views of girls, like those of their mothers, are often not sought on matters affecting the family, and even less on community matters or other public issues. In such an environment, it is almost impossible for girls to develop physically, mentally and socially to their fullest potential, and to prepare for their roles as full citizens and to undertake unrestricted career choices. In addition, rapid urbanization, growing economic disparities between rich and poor (especially between the resources that women and men control), armed conflict and gender-based violence exacerbate the already vulnerable situation of girls in many parts of the world.

109. Furthermore, globalization, poverty, erosion of values, and family and community ties make adolescent girls increasingly exposed to the sex industry, child pornography, and trafficking in women and children. These phenomena are neither confronted with adequate legal and political measures at the national and international levels nor sufficiently addressed by civil society.

110. Neglect or abuse of girls in childhood generally leads to, or is linked with, a lower status for them as women. This situation not only contradicts the human rights of girls and women but also deprives societies of their full contributions in all spheres of life. If girls are given equal opportunities to develop themselves to their fullest potential, they are more likely to grow up to be empowered women.

111. The increased awareness of prevailing discrimination against the girl child and the results of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing, which called for concrete

measures to improve their situation and protect their human rights, led to the elaboration by some Governments, assisted by non-governmental organizations, of new policies and gender-sensitive projects aimed at the improvement of the situation of girls in various sectors. Some positive examples can be noted in this regard. In the area of education, in Malawi primary school textbooks portrayed girls and women in more realistic and positive roles. Funds were provided by the United States Agency for International Development to develop a gender-appropriate curriculum for use in primary schools, teachers' colleges and in-service teacher training. In Zimbabwe, the Ministries of Education and Culture and Higher Education have adopted a policy of positive discrimination in favour of female students with regard to the allocation of advanced level, technical and scientific training places in secondary schools and technical colleges respectively.[22] In Bangladesh, where the Female Education Scholarship Programme (FESP) awarded scholarships to girls in grades 6 to 10, girls' enrolment doubled and drop-out rates were significantly reduced (see CEDAW/C/ZWE/1). The FESP in Nepal showed similar results.[22] In India, a non-governmental organization, in cooperation with the Centre for Development and Population Activities, launched a project that offered training for adolescent girls who dropped out of school.[22] The girls had the possibility to work at home with periodic visits to local training centres. Upon successful completion of their course, they received a high school certificate. In Namibia, the project focused on the preparation of girls for public life and decision-making.[22] The Non-Governmental Organizations Preparatory Committee for the Fourth World Conference on Women has developed an initiative to train young women for leadership positions in the Namibian women's movement, and has provided selected young girls with special financial and academic support. With regard to policies and laws aimed at combating child prostitution, sex tourism, trafficking in children and child pornography, some countries have enacted specific provisions to ensure better protection of children. Sri Lanka amended its penal code to include sexual exploitation and abuse which cover prostitution. The Philippines addressed child prostitution and other sexual abuse in a recent law against child abuse, exploitation and discrimination. The Saint Kitts and Nevis Child Welfare Board Act 1994 defined child abuse.

112. Discrimination against the girl child is particularly marked during adolescence (see CEDAW/C/NAM/1). Adolescence is the period of transition from childhood into adulthood during the second decade of life. It is a time of physical and emotional transition, a critical period for personal development and a stage when impressions are made and minds are formed. It is during adolescence, at home, school and in the community, that girls and boys learn how to relate to others, about their position in society and about the roles they are expected to play as adults. Adolescent girls are often treated as inferior to boys and socialized to have low self-esteem. They may receive conflicting and confusing messages on their gender roles, and may be denied the same opportunities as boys to receive education, skills training and employment, and to improve their status. At the onset of puberty or even before, many are considered adults and face early marriage,[23] premature and/or unwanted pregnancy,[24] and coercion into commercial sex work. There is also a considerable risk that they may become victims of sexual exploitation and/or exposed to the risks of HIV/AIDS.

113. Because of their biological and social role differences, adolescent girls have needs that differ significantly from those of boys. Yet their specific situation and needs remain largely ignored and neglected. And only a few studies have focused on adolescent girls and their situation, or sought to explore ways in which the risks facing adolescent girls can be addressed and their human rights protected.

114. It was in this context that the Division for the Advancement of Women, jointly with UNICEF, UNFPA and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), organized an expert group meeting on adolescent girls and their rights from 13 to 17 October 1997 at Addis Ababa. The meeting focused on the following critical questions relevant to improving the situation of adolescent girls:

(a) Adolescent girls in need of special protection, including girls in armed conflict situation; refugee girls; girls who are sexually exploited; girls with disability; working girls; girls living in conditions of temporary or permanent loss of family and/or primary caregivers; and girls affected by deficient laws and abusive legal and judicial processes;

(b) Health, including reproductive and sexual health and nutrition;

(c) Creating an enabling environment for the empowerment of adolescent girls.

115. Since the expert group meeting focused on adolescence, many of the recommendations specifically address this phase of a girl's life. However, most of the strategies resulting from the meeting are relevant to the advancement of girls at any age; they are set out below.

B. Strategies for accelerating implementation

1. General recommendations

116. The creation of an enabling environment for empowering adolescent girls, particularly in line with the Beijing Platform for Action's strategic objectives L.1, L.2, L.4 and L.5, requires the recognition of their specific needs and situation. Resources need to be mobilized and secured to carry out in-depth assessments of the status of adolescent girls. This includes the disaggregation of existing information by sex, age and other relevant variables, and the acquisition and dissemination of new information, including: (a) qualitative and quantitative information about the status of girls; (b) the factors that affect the fulfilment of their rights in society; and (c) what will work best to achieve positive changes for more effective policies and programmes. Such findings should be broadly disseminated, and information-sharing and networking among young people, government agencies, international organizations and non-governmental organizations should be encouraged.

117. The media should lead public information campaigns to eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls and achieve gender equality within society. Such campaigns, for example, could focus on the historical role played by women in national liberation struggles, negotiating for peace and rebuilding the nation after war, and their past and present roles in national and international development. At the same time, positive role models for girls emphasizing the importance of women's various contribution to society in social, cultural, economic and political activities should be presented by media and through other forms of communication, including traditional communication modes to ensure that messages reach a wide audience. This is also an effective way for boys and men to recognize their equal partnership with the female population since boys and men also need to be trained to be gender-sensitive.

118. Laws and other regulations should be reviewed to eliminate all forms of *de jure* and de facto discrimination against women and girls. It is the obligation of States to ensure that rights of girls are respected, protected and promoted. At the same time, initiatives should be taken to ensure that girls participate actively, effectively and equally with boys at all levels of social, economic, political and cultural activities, and to encourage positive interaction for girls and boys throughout those activities.

119. States that are not parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and/or the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women should take urgent measures towards ratifying those Conventions. States that are parties to the two Conventions are urged to ensure their full implementation through the adoption of all necessary legislative, administrative and other measures, and by fostering and enabling environment that encourages full respect for the rights of adolescent girls. At the same time, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should be encouraged to make particular reference to the needs and situations of adolescent girls when considering country reports, and their comments should address those issues.

120. The rights of the girl child to the realization of her human potential in all spheres of life should be put at the forefront of action at all levels of society. This requires an approach in which the needs and views of the girl child are elicited and taken into account in the planning, designing, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes designed for their benefit. Girls should be trained in advocacy and leadership skills to prepare for active and equal participation in all aspects of civic life. The approach should be multisectoral and holistic, and based on needs and opportunities throughout the life cycle. Government agencies and civil society actors should make every effort to generate and develop a collective understanding of gender issues and their impact on social values, community attitudes and the behaviour of the girl child at the national and community levels.

121. In formulating policies and programmes addressing the rights and needs of the girl child, Governments should pay special attention to the protection of girls from sexual exploitation and abuse, harmful traditional practices, including early marriage, teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. They should also address special needs of girls in the situation of armed conflict; refugee girls; working girls; girls in dysfunctional family structures or living in conditions of loss of family or primary caregivers; and girls with disability. Targeted programmes may allow the specific requirements of these girls to be examined in a more detailed manner, which can help to effectively implement policy measures to improve their status. This can be best organized in coordination with non-governmental organizations and community groups whose work involves close interaction with adolescent girls and that are familiar with and sensitive to local culture and social arrangements.

122. All levels of society, including the family, community, governmental and non-governmental institutions, should be involved in implementing policy measures to improve the status of girls. This requires a participatory and holistic approach, actively involving all sectors of society, including

justice, education, health, employment, social welfare, economic planning, religious affairs, youth and culture. Regional and international institutions should collaborate closely and respond to the needs of all actors at the national level. Effective mobilization of the whole community and child-focused community structures at the national and local levels should be given the highest priority to assume responsibility for situation analysis, advocacy, monitoring, protection, recovery, rehabilitation and the participation of the girl child.

2. Adolescent girls in need of special protection

123. Several factors are contributing to the growing number of adolescent girls in difficult circumstances, such as war, civil strife, ethnic conflict, lack of legal mechanisms to punish perpetrators, increasing substance abuse, changing value systems in transitional economies, and the general increase in dysfunctional family structures due to, for example, overseas migration of primary caregivers. Governments, international and national organizations and civil society should:

(a) Formulate policies and programmes for the protection, participation and rehabilitation of girls in need of special protection;

(b) Organize community-based actions, including setting up local committees to monitor the implementation of the above-mentioned Conventions, with special focus on adolescent girls;

(c) Promote a child-to-child approach in which trained adolescent girls communicate with, counsel and empower other girls.

124. With regard to girls affected by armed conflict and refugee girls, Governments, international and national organizations and civil society should:

(a) Encourage groups at the community level to take a substantive role in reporting violations of the rights of girls and in providing support services;

(b) Undertake various measures, including training and awareness-raising campaigns, to make personnel involved in peacekeeping and security missions, camp leaders and other support workers gender-sensitive;

(c) Ensure access to education of refugee and displaced girls in camps;

(d) Implement the recommendations in the study on the impact of armed conflict on children (A/51/306 and Add.1), with special emphasis on adolescent girls and in close collaboration with UNHCR and other international aid agencies.[25]

125. In order to advance the status of disabled girls, Governments, international and national organizations and civil society should ensure that disabled adolescent girls have access to medical and social services, and should provide them with education, training and employment opportunities.

126. With regard to adolescent working girls, Governments, international and national organizations and civil society should:

(a) Take a leading role in monitoring and implementing ILO standards and existing national laws on child labour;

(b) Ensure the rights of adolescent working girls to education, health, food, shelter and recreation, and protect them from sexual abuses in the work setting.

127. In order to protect adolescent girls from abuse and trafficking Governments should:

(a) Condemn and prosecute the perpetrators of violations of the rights of girls and groups and individuals operating in the sex industry;

(b) Review or enact legal intercountry adoption laws and policies to prevent trafficking of girls under the guise of adoption;

(c) In coordination with civil society, support the recovery of victims by establishing recovery centres with specially trained personnel;

(d) Completely ban child pornography, and strictly prosecute persons engaged in the production and distribution of such materials.

3. Health of adolescent girls

128. Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity. The health of adolescent girls is closely linked to the developmental nature of this period of life. In order to promote the health of adolescent girls, the Governments, international and national organizations and communities should:

(a) Provide a supportive and safe environment at homes, schools and workplaces, and give due attention to the health and well-being of adolescent girls;

(b) Establish coalitions of concerned organizations and individuals to advocate for adolescent girl's

reproductive and sexual health and for eliminating traditional practices that are harmful to the health of girls;

(c) Support provision of comprehensive and accurate information and education about adolescent girls' health through multiple sources, including homes, schools, outreach programmes, youth centres, religious institutions, health services, media and social marketing programmes;

(d) Provide girls with the opportunity to participate in sports and recreational activities.

129. In view of the importance of grounding policies and programmes solidly in reality and in order to provide better quality information on the health status and needs of adolescent girls, national and international statistical and research institutions should:

(a) Disaggregate data on adolescents by age and sex;

(b) Establish and maintain a database on the status of adolescent girls' health and development, including reproductive and sexual health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS;

(c) Develop qualitative and quantitative indicators for the health of adolescent girls and boys, and consider those indicators when programming activities for adolescents;

(d) Disseminate research findings in an accessible format.

130. Health services must be sensitive towards the needs of adolescent girls. Therefore, Governments, non-governmental organizations and public and private service providers should:

(a) Expand services, including counselling to adolescents, by building on existing services, which should ensure privacy and confidentiality, low cost, and accessible hours and sites so as to optimize their use by adolescents;

(b) Ensure that all medical personnel are sensitized and trained with regard to the special health needs of adolescent girls;

(c) Monitor and evaluate existing reproductive health services, and develop guidelines to ensure that they meet the special needs of adolescent girls.

4. Empowerment and human rights of adolescent girls

131. Education, family, culture, the socio-economic environment, law and legal reform, and the role of the media are critical for creating an enabling environment for realizing the human rights of adolescent girls and their empowerment.

132. Education is an important tool for the empowerment of girls. Besides providing access to knowledge, job and career opportunities, education facilitates intellectual and social development, promotes health and contributes to responsible decision-making. Girls are often limited in their access to education and teachers. Moreover, educational materials often reproduce a stereotyped image of girls as passive and destined to serve others. Governments, international and national organizations, civil society and educational institutions should:

(a) Provide affordable gender-sensitive education at all levels and equal career opportunities for both sexes;

(b) Revise educational materials, teaching methodologies and curricula in order to eliminate negative images of girls and include positive role models;

(c) Design curricula that include information on women's contribution to history, development and culture;

(d) Introduce gender training for teachers;

(e) Carry out special programmes for girls who have dropped out of schools.

133. Stereotyped images are a major barrier to the empowerment of adolescent girls. Both families and the mass media play a prominent role in shaping the socially constituted role of girls. Governments, international and national organizations, and civil society should:

(a) Educate family members to respect the rights of adolescent girls according to the positive cultural and spiritual principles inherent within a society;

(b) Encourage parents to share family responsibilities on an equal basis by providing special support, such as parental leave, child-care facilities and family life education;

(c) Establish guidelines for the media and utilize the potential of media in order to change the prevailing negative images of women and to promote the advancement of adolescent girls.

134. In order to foster in adolescent girls a sense of their own potential to develop and contribute as responsible citizens to society, Governments, educational institutions and professional associations, jointly with non-governmental organizations, should:

(a) Actively involve boys and men in all efforts to improve the situation of adolescent girls;

(b) Re-examine cultural traditions and practices so as to discover positive traditions that reinforce the international human rights standards regarding girls;

(c) Share best practices from other countries and communities to illustrate that investments in the human development of adolescent girls are of critical importance to the well-being and progress of the family, community and the nation;

(d) Develop institutional mechanisms that will enable the consideration of views expressed by adolescent girls and women when formulating laws and national development policies and projects, and use such institutional mechanisms to provide for a gender-impact assessment of those policies and projects.

Notes

[1] See *Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Copenhagen, 14-30 July 1980* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.80.IV.3), chap. I, sect. A, para. 141 (f); *Sixth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Caracas, Venezuela, 25 August-5 September 1980* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.81.IV.4), chap. I, sect. B.

[2] See *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A, paras. 258, 261, 262, 288, 290, 291 and 297.

[3] See for example, the report of an expert group meeting on violence in the family, with special emphasis on its effects on women, 1986, and the report of an expert group meeting on measures to eradicate violence against women, 1993.

[4] See Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *The State of the World's Refugees: The Challenge of Protection* (London, Penguin Books, 1993).

[5] See also Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Guidelines for the Protection of Refugee Women* (Geneva, 1991), paras. 30-43.

[6] *Gagovic and Others: The "Foca" Indictment* IT-96-23-I, 26 June 1996.

[7] Before the Yugoslav Tribunal, see *in re* Karadzic and Mladic indictment (Prosecutor v. Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic), 1995 ICTY, No. IT-95-5-I (25 July); before the Rwanda Tribunal, see *in re* Jean Paul Akayesu amended indictment (Prosecutor v. Jean Paul Akayesu), ICTR-96-4-T, 30 June 1997.

[8] Commission decision No. 3, "Personal injury and mental pain and anguish", specifically recognizes that serious personal injury includes instances of physical or mental injury arising from sexual assault.

[9] See *Aydin v. Turkey*, European Court of Human Rights, September 1997.

[10] See *Jane Doe I and Jane Doe II v. Karadzic*, United States District Court Civil Case, No. 93 0878 PKL, complaint, and *Kadic and others v. Karadzic*, United States District Court, Civil Action, No. 93-Civ-1163, complaint, p. 11.

[11] For example, "Guidelines on women refugee claimants fearing gender-related persecution", issued by the Chairperson of the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board in March 1993 and reissued in 1996; "Considerations for asylum officers adjudicating asylum claims for women", issued by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service in 1996; "Guidelines in gender issues for decision makers", issued by the Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs in 1996.

[12] The report of the meeting is available from the Division for the Advancement of Women.

[13] See, for example, the concluding comments of the Human Rights Committee regarding the third periodic report of Peru. In this case, clandestine abortions were the main cause of maternal mortality, and provisions criminalizing abortion even for pregnancies resulting from rape were found by the Committee to subject women to inhumane treatment, and to be possibly incompatible with articles 3, 6, and 7 of the Covenant. Consequently, the Committee recommended that Peru take the necessary measures to ensure that women do not risk their life because of the existence of restrictive legal provisions on abortions (see A/52/40, paras. 160 and 167). The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights increasingly assesses how women's enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights compares to men's with regard to work-related rights, and the impact of violence against women and of societal attitudes towards women in this regard. See, for example, the Committee's concluding comments on Ukraine (E/1996/22, paras. 263 and 272). In its concluding comments on Algeria, the Committee deplored the fact that such fundamental freedoms as the rights to work, education and freedom of movement, and the right to freely choose a spouse are not fully guaranteed for Algerian women (E/1996/22, paras. 294 and 298).

[14] As of 1 January 1998, there are 161 States parties to the Convention.

[15] A rights-based approach is increasingly underpinning the work of United Nations funds and programmes. For example, in January 1996, UNICEF's Executive Board endorsed an approach to the UNICEF follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women that, *inter alia*, emphasizes children's and women's rights, enabling UNICEF to use a rights approach to strengthen action at both the policy and programming levels. The United Nations Development Programme is establishing the link between sustainable human development and the protection and promotion of human rights.

[16] A study entitled "Progress and obstacles in the implementation of human rights: review of the period 1945-1992", which was prepared for the World Conference on Human Rights, noted that of the 157 States having constitutions, 83 per cent covered the three civil freedoms (life, security of person and justice), and the three rights to equality (race, sex, minorities). On the other hand, only 38 per cent covered the group of seven economic and social freedoms (forced labour, child labour, freedom of association

and the rights to food, health, education and employment) (see A/CONF.157/PC/60/Add.1, para. 19).

[17] For a summary of some of the arguments, see the study *Right to Adequate Food as a Human Right*, prepared by the Special Rapporteur of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.XIV.2).

[18] See, in particular, *Women in a Changing Global Economy: World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.IV.1), chap. II.

[19] The report of the meeting is available from the Division for the Advancement of Women, as well as on the Division's Web site.

[20] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.91.XIV.1.

[21] See "Women: looking beyond 2000" (United Nations, New York, 1995).

[22] K. M. Kurz, C. J. Prather, "Improving the quality of life of girls" (New York, UNICEF, 1995).

[23] See also "Enabling environment for empowering adolescent girls", background paper prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women for an expert group meeting on adolescent girls and their rights, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 13-17 October 1997.

[24] See *The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XVII.2).

[25] See also "Adolescent girls and their rights: girls in need of special protection", background paper prepared by UNICEF for an expert group meeting on adolescent girls and their rights, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 13-17 October 1997.